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THE

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

BRITISH

THE

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

AN HISTORICAL NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

E. M. F.

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THE

DUKE OF CLARENCE.

CHAP. I.

"THERE was an air of melancholy reſerve," continued the Counteſs, "deeply impreſſed on the features of the Earl, my huſband; which better pleaſed my ſaddened heart, than youth and vivacity. I felt too the ſacrifice of my youth, to a man old enough to be my father, was a greater compliment to the memory of Montcalm, than if I

had united myſelf to one, more ſuited to my years and diſpoſition."

"He was about the age of forty,—of a grave and ſaturnine complexion, and not unpleaſing figure. I ſoon found that his diſpoſition was naturally inclined to jealouſy; and that the attentions paid me by the young courtiers, though they gratified his vanity, yet rendered him reſtleſs, and uneaſy; and could he have quitted the high appointment which he held at court, he would gladly have retired into the country.

"I have ſcarcely mentioned to you, my dear niece," continued the Counteſs, "that dear, though humble friend of mine, the kind and faithful Agnes; whoſe tender participation in my ſorrows ſoftened the bitterneſs of many painful moments. Generous, diſintereſted creature, how much, how greatly am I indebted to thee for thy unremitted ſervices to the hapleſs children of thy unfortunate friend! Ah! that it might be permitted us yet

yet to meet! But heaven's will be done; and I ſubmit myſelf with reſignation, to its decrees.

" She had been abſent, during the progreſs of my unfortunate paſſion; and returned not till Montcalm had left me. From her ſociety I derived my greateſt comfort; as in the diſſipation of a court, I could not ſufficiently forget what I was;—what I had loſt, to enter, with *that* avidity, into its pleaſures, ſo as to give a zeſt to relieve the inſipidity of them.

Her company alone filled up the melancholy void in my heart; as Mortagne was little calculated to inſpire me with any ſentiments, but thoſe of gratitude for the diſintereſtedneſs of his paſſion, and reſpect for his birth and family. As the father of my children, (and by this time I had brought him two) I paſſed by, or overlooked the faults of his temper: And my heart probably would have began to have conceived more tender

ſenſations towards him, notwithſtanding the diſparity of our ages, had he not repreſſed, in their infancy, thoſe new-born ſoftneſſes, which ſprang in my ſoul, by his cauſeleſs ſeverity, and his unconquerable reſerve. How frequently has my heart been pained by ſeeing his ſudden ſtarts of paſſion! His ungovernable rage to a trembling domeſtic, for a trivial offence!—I have ſometimes viewed him with a degree of fear, bordering upon diſlike; which I only outwardly could repreſs.

Carefully did I from every eye conceal the real ſentiments I experienced for the Earl; as had I once been off my guard, young as I was, and being the general object of admiration, I ſhould have laid myſelf open to the attacks of libertiniſm. As it was, I eſcaped; and Mortagne had the ſatisfaction of obſerving, that the attention and regard I excited, never paſſed thoſe bounds of reſpect, due to his wife.

"Of all my Lord's family, or friends, none enjoyed his confidence, but father Bertrand, his domeſtic chaplain.

"This wily *monk* entirely ruled and governed, by his artifices, the mind of his patron; who never embarked in any affair of conſequence, without firſt having conſulted his holy counſellor.

"Though deficient of any other, he had talents for intrigue; which well ſuited his occupation of confidant and under agent to a courtier, though ill agreed with thoſe tenets, he affected to profeſs.

"Unhappily this wretch dared to conceive a criminal paſſion for me; and ſought, by uſing every endeavour that invention, aided by the moſt ſtudied caution, could ſuggeſt, to ſucceed in his baſe deſigns. Thinking to take advantage of the weakneſs natural to youth, at firſt he was content to laviſh on my perſon the moſt extravagant encomiums; but find-

ing that I received his fulſome compliments, with the indifference and contempt they merited, he deſiſted,—and tried, by the moſt artful methods, to undermine the Earl in my favor, by revealing ſome illicit practices, which had paſſed within his knowledge; apologizing at the ſame time for this breach of confidence, by declaring, that ſeverely as he frequently reprehended his Excellency for his crimes, yet his exhortations had no effect;—and hourly had he cauſe to lament, that a character ſo pure, ſo virtuous as mine, ſhould have the misfortune to be united to a ſtateſman.

" Without perceiving his drift, and concealing the real horror my heart experienced, at hearing that a being ſo cloſely allied to me, was capable of the guilty practices, imputed to him by Bertrand,—I coldly demanded, if he meant, by informing the wife of his patron with her Lord's private tranſactions, to make her remonſtrate with him on the enormity of them; or for what purpoſe they were diſcloſed.

The traitor, alarmed at my queſtion, with heſitation anſwered, that he had formed a better opinion of my judgment, than to ſuppoſe I would run ſuch a riſk; as diſpleaſure would fall heavy both on himſelf and me,—the Earl being ill able to brook a wife's interference with ſtate affairs, or a friend's having betrayed him to her. 'Why then was I to be made acquainted, with what was not within my province to reform?' He bluſhed, and ſeemed confuſed; but murmured out ſomething of friendſhip, and the confidence he had in my goodneſs, which made him anxious for my happineſs. 'You have miſtaken the way of ſhewing it, father,' cried I, ſmiling contemptuouſly upon him; 'And remember for the future, ſhould you diſcloſe any thing to me, which reflects diſhonour on my Lord, he ſhall not remain ignorant, how worthily he has beſtowed his confidence.' Too confounded, and abaſhed at my words, to anſwer me, the hypocrite quitted the apartment in ſullen ſilence.

" From that time, he tried to make me ſenſible of his power with the Earl, and how dangerous it was in any one, having the temerity to exaſperate a perſon of his conſequence. Soon had I reaſon to experience the fatal effects of his wrath; as my Lord, contrary to his uſual conduct towards me, became ſullen, peeviſh, and diſſatisfied with every action; nor could all my endeavours penetrate the reaſon of this alarming change.

" Till now Mortagne, whatever were his faults, preſerved towards me a confidence,—nay even a tenderneſs, which, from a man of his cold and reſerved temper, ſeemed to all who were acquainted with his diſpoſition ſurpriſing;—and conſoled me with the idea, that, though my heart could not be brought to own Mortagne Lord, yet it had not influenced my behaviour hitherto, ſo as to have given him cauſe to ſuſpect its eſtrangement.

" In ſecret I wept this painful reverſe of conduct; And one day that my Lord had treated

treated me with a harſhneſs, which bordered upon cruelty, no longer able to bear the agony his uſage gave me, than whilſt he remained,—I claſped my hands in a tranſport of grief; 'O my father!' cried I, "couldſt thou ſee the cruel ſacrifice thou haſt made of thy Julia, thy heart indeed would bleed!' I had ſcarce finiſhed this apoſtrophe, when I ſaw Bertrand before me, and on his knees. Amazement and ſurpriſe put a ſtop to my tears, and prevented my utterance. He took advantage of my aſtoniſhment, and had time to breathe forth his infamous paſſion, ere I recovered ſufficiently from my confuſion, to put a ſtop to his odious profeſſions. I heard him, with mingled contempt and indignation; and riſing from my ſeat, haughtily forbade him ever to preſume to enter my preſence again;—adding that my Lord now ſhould view his boſom-friend, in his true colours. I was quitting the room, when haſtily riſing from the poſture, he had thrown himſelf into, the trembling villain, awed by my manner,

and terrified by my threats, caught hold of my robe, and forcibly detained me.

" I now became alarmed; and my fear prevented me from diſtinguiſhing the terror, and diſmay, my words had excited in the perfidious Bertrand. Yet, concealing my apprehenſions, and caſting on him a look of diſdain, and anger, ' Why am I detained, Sir? Am I again to be inſulted by the avowal of ſentiments, equally derogatory to my honour to hear, and to yours to avow? Sentiments doubly criminal, in one of your ſacred function to harbour?' I was proceeding; but again he threw himſelf at my feet, and in terms the moſt moving beſought my pardon, and pity, for what his anguiſh at ſeeing my diſtreſs, more than any hope he had entertained, had extorted from him. Long, long, he continued, had he ſmothered in ſilence, a love that conſumed him; till this fatal moment, or rather fatal ſight, had compelled the imprudent avowal. His life, his honour, he ſaid, were in my hands; and he ſolemnly avowed, never to

ſurvive

ſurvive the loſs of the latter. Could I, purſued he, for a crime involuntarily puniſh him ſo ſeverely? for only the fault of having conceived a ſentiment, which was filled with reſpect, and admiration, at my character; whoſe baſis was a profound, though ardent veneration for my virtue; which, had he the power, he would not ſully?

"For a conſiderable time, I heard him unmoved; but at length his penitence, his ſeeming contrition, and vows of never again offending my ears, by a repetition of his crime, ſubdued my reſentment; and I conſented not only to forgive him, but paſſed my word, ere he left me, that no one, however dear to me, ſhould be intruſted with his offence.

"Fatal promiſe! unhappy concealment! Ah! little did I know the blackneſs of that heart, I conſented to pardon:—That a wretch, who owed his all to my weak mercy,

ſhould ſeek to deſtroy the creature, that ſaved him!

"From that moment, I have ſince been taught, I had made a bitter, though concealed enemy:—One who, though apparently my warmeſt and moſt reſpectful friend, was yet, at the ſame time, ſecretly contriving ſchemes for my undoing. Convinced, from the depravity of his own heart, that his ſecret was not ſafe in my hands, and judging, ſhould he at any time give me cauſe for diſpleaſure, that I would betray him to his patron,—he determined, if poſſible, to get rid of an object, whoſe preſence now was a conſtant reſtraint upon his actions; and before whom he was obliged to appear more guarded in his behaviour, than was long ſupportable to one of his haughty and imperious ſpirit.

"Two years had elapſed, ſince my union with Mortagne, during which time I had never once received a line from my brother: When, one morning, being with my father, letters

letters arrived from the continent. He read them with viſible diſorder; and upon my repeated entreaties to know the cauſe of the concern expreſſed in his countenance, gave me to underſtand, though with ſome precaution, that Reginald was upon his return to England; and that (here his voice faltered) with him came *Montcalm*. That a few days after the news of his death arrived, his ſon had wrote to contradict the account; but that, knowing I ſhould retract the half conſent, I had given him to wed Mortagne, he had concealed that letter from me. I will not attempt to deſcribe the agonies that rent my ſoul, on learning how greatly I had been deceived; deceived too by a father, who now too late repented his barbarous cruelty, as my countenance ſufficiently told, that happineſs was far from being the portion of his daughter, with the man he had forced her to give her hand to: And he had the mortification, to find, that Montcalm, by the death of a rich relative, was in poſſeſſion of a fortune,

worthy

worthy of a union with the firſt houſe in England.

" From that dreadful hour, the little peace I yet retained within my boſom, fled; and the ſituation my Lord found me in, on the firſt knowledge of my miſery, excited his keeneſt ſuſpicions. The remembrance of the bliſsful moments, I had paſſed with Montcalm, which hitherto I allowed myſelf unreſtrained to indulge, now no longer afforded me pleaſure; it became, on the contrary, a ſource of uneaſineſs and pain to me. The image, which my imagination uſed ſo fondly to dwell upon, when I ſuppoſed it dead, to all but my heart, now living, appeared to me a crime, whenever it preſented itſelf before my mental eye. Hard taſk, to baniſh all thoſe pleaſures, which but a few hours ſince I had held as innocent; and to have them ſucceeded by regret, ſelf-upbraidings, and deep though ſilent anguiſh! I now dreaded the arrival of my brother, as much as before I wiſhed it. For with him would return Montcalm.

" From

" From my father I learnt the time; and determined, at all events, to fly an interview, ſo dangerous to my peace. I petitioned, therefore, the Earl, to allow me to retire into the country; alledging as an excuſe for a wiſh, ſo ſeemingly inconſiſtent with the affection I profeſſed for my brother, that my health required the change. Though Mortagne heſitated not in granting my requeſt; yet he regarded me with a look ſo penetrating, that the ſecrets of my very ſoul ſeemed expoſed to his piercing glance. I ſhrank with uneaſineſs, from an inquiry ſo dangerous. Ah! had it been any being but Mortagne, to whom I had vowed obedience,—if he had ſought, at firſt, to win my confidence, as well as hand, my heart, open and ingenuous as it was, would have ſought in the boſom of my huſband commiſeration of my ſorrows. But to make Mortagne my confidant, my friend, was impoſſible.

" Upon my firſt interview with my father, after having ſettled my little plan, the Earl, con-

contrary to my intentions, and wiſh, was preſent. He immediately almoſt introduced the ſubject of my departure. 'Is it not ſtrange, my Lord,' ſaid he, addreſſing my father, 'that Julia will not wait the return of your ſon; but is determined on quitting us in a few days?' The Baron was evidently diſtreſſed, by the Earl's applying to him, on ſuch an occaſion, for his opinion. 'I know not, my Lord,' replied he with heſitation; 'but the Counteſs, no doubt, has reaſons.' He ſtopped in confuſion, as having ſaid too much. Yet, fearing to alarm the ſuſpicions of the Earl, by too readily concurring with my intentions, without aſſigning a reaſon for his approbation, and too intimately intereſted for my removal, to urge a wiſh for retarding my journey,—he caſt a look of fond ſolicitude, and tender acquieſcence, on his bluſhing daughter; and added, 'In truth, my Lord, Julia's looks point out to us the neceſſity of this ſeparation; and our Reginald would ill thank her for the compliment of waiting his arrival, if the health of one ſo dear to him

ſhould

ſhould fall the ſacrifice: And he can viſit her at Graham-Hall, as well as at your palace here.' 'True, he can ſo, my Lord,' replied Mortagne, with a thoughtful and diſturbed air; and almoſt immediately riſing, quitted the room.

"No ſooner had he departed, than my father, with precipitation, aroſe from his ſeat, and folded me in his arms. 'Matchleſs Julia!' exclaimed he with tranſport; 'equally prudent and wiſe. How ought Mortagne to adore my treaſure! How too ought thy father to think, to applaud thee, for thy virtuous conſideration!' I well knew what he alluded to. I turned away my face, to conceal the tears, that would force themſelves to my eyes, unwilling he ſhould feel the reproach they carried. 'And has my cruelty undone thee, Julia?' cried my father, perceiving what I was not inclined to diſcover. 'Alas! wretch that I was! to force a heart, ſo good, ſo dutiful, as thine! Curſe on my ambition, which compelled thee to give thy vows to Mor-

Mortagne!' My firmneſs forſook me; and ſoftened beyond expreſſion, I gave way to that grief, which I could no longer reſtrain. 'Oh! my heart's deareſt treaſure! my beloved Julia!' cried my father, 'Reſtrain theſe tears: or you will kill your parent. How think you, can I bear this ſight, without agonies the moſt bitter; and know myſelf the cruel cauſe of them!'

"He claſped me to his breaſt, in ſilent anguiſh: I felt his repentant tears drop faſt upon my boſom. I forgot all his cruelties at this; and though the ſentence almoſt died upon my tongue, yet I tried to aſſure him, that his daughter was not unhappy: That time would cure thoſe wounds, which her heart had ſuffered: And begged him not to expoſe himſelf to the rage of the impetuous and highly exaſperated Reginald, by confeſſing the deception that had been practiſed. 'On me let all his cenſures fall, my father,' ſaid I, 'to know myſelf innocent, will ſupport me againſt his anger.' He bleſt me for

for my goodneſs; thanked me for the comfort I tried to give him, by declaring that I was not wretched with Mortagne: Yet, though he tried to conceal from me his fears and ſuſpicions to the contrary, I ſaw plainly, he doubted the truth of what I averred to be the caſe.

" The morning previous to my departure, as I took leave of him, having prayed for my happineſs, and beſtowed his benediction on me,—the Earl not being preſent, he ſaid, in a mournful and ſolemn tone; ' Julia, I feel as if this meeting will be our laſt. I cannot account for the dreadful preſages, that fill my heart on your account. I already repent my concurrence with your determination. Stay, my daughter; ſtay, I conjure you.' ' Aſk me not, my Lord, my father,' cried I, ' to comply with a requeſt, which may excite the ſuſpicions of the Earl, or at leaſt leſſen me in his opinion. Muſt he not think, (and with reaſon) your daughter is light, puerile, and inconſtant in her reſolutions. My father

ſighed

ſighed deeply. 'I ſee,' cried he, 'I muſt not urge you againſt what my reaſon tells me is for the beſt. Go, my Julia; and remember, that, whatever may befal you, you have a father.

"At the requeſt of the Earl, Father Bertrand accompanied me: And though this addition to my little party added not to its pleaſures, yet I made it an invariable rule, never to oppoſe, without alledging good reaſons, any deſire of the Earl's. And I concluded, that, not being able to quit the court himſelf, he was anxious ſome eye, watchful for his intereſts, ſhould witneſs my conduct, whilſt removed from him.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

"BLEST with the ſociety of my beloved children, and my faithful Agnes," continued the Counteſs, "the days not unpleaſingly paſſed; till a few ſhort lines from my brother, announcing his return, and his intention of viſiting the Hall, in the courſe of a few days, diſturbed the ſerenity of them, and again reſtored to this heart, thoſe uneaſy perturbations, which for ſome time I had been endeavouring to baniſh from it.

I had been vainly expecting my Reginald, with a mixture of painful, yet pleaſing impatience, not eaſy to be deſcribed, for ſome days;

days; when, one morning, returning from a walk, I had been taking with my little Alfred, who now could almoſt run alone, as I was entering the hall, I perceived one of my brother's domeſtics. I flew into the great parlour to meet him. He was traverſing the apartment, with evident emotion. 'My Reginald,' ſaid I, ſpringing forwards to embrace him, 'this is indeed a cordial to my heart.' He coldly embraced me. 'Lady Mortagne is well, I hope,' cried he with a petrifying air of coldneſs. This was too bitter for me. I ſank down into a chair. 'Cruel brother!' ſaid I, burſting into tears; 'Ah! how little do I merit this treatment!' 'My ſiſter, my Julia,' cried my brother, folding me in his arms, and forgetting his anger, at the ſight of my diſtreſs, 'forgive my unkindneſs; and impute it to the pain I feel, at ſeeing you Mortagne's wife. I had hoped——' He pauſed, and ſighed. 'But I will not reproach you: It is now too late.' 'Ah! ſpare reproaches, my brother, and believe I deſerve them not. I know

you

you have been cruelly deceived.' 'My ſiſter,' returned my brother with precipitation, 'I have learnt the injuries you have received from him, whom chance, not nature, made our father. Montcalm bade me commend him to you.' 'He is then returned with you?' 'He is. Ah Julia! how could you ſo ſoon unite yourſelf to ſuch a man as Mortagne, after believing the death of a Montcalm! Mutable, inconſtant ſex that you are!' 'You might have withſtood the tears, the entreaties of an imploring parent, De Clifford,' cried I, with a reproachful air, 'that I would not abandon his old age; for that was the only alternative, by which I muſt have eſcaped an union with the Earl; but I had not a heart, firm enough to reſiſt ſuch pleadings.'

"My brother ſtruck his clenched hand to his forehead. 'Deceiving murderous parent!' he called my father. I could not bear to hear theſe bitter epithets beſtowed on ſo ſacred a character. I reaſoned, and remonſtrated

ſtrated with him, on the impiety of his rage; and at length brought him to a degree of tolerable calmneſs. He then beſought me to receive his friend, though only for a few moments; and in his preſence: But, though he uſed every argument, entreaty and reproach, he could not bring me to a compliance with a requeſt ſo imprudent.

" He left me, highly enraged at my obſtinacy, as he termed it; nor could all my endeavours prevail upon him to ſleep in the manſion of him, who had cauſed the unhappineſs of his friend.

" Not long after this, I received a packet of letters; one of which, though directed by my brother, I found was from Montcalm. Haſtily having read a ſignature ſo dreaded, trembling I laid down the letter; prudently determining not to read its contents, but to ſend it back, with a remonſtrance to my brother on his imprudence. Would I had firmneſs ſufficient to have kept ſo proper a reſolve!

ſolve! But a latent ſpark of curioſity, to know the ſentiments, Montcalm entertained for my conduct, aided by a love the moſt powerful, overturned all the wiſe reſolutions, which duty dictated; need I ſay, I peruſed the beloved lines. They were partly to this effect:

"*To the Counteſs of Mortagne.*

"I reproach you not, Julia, for the miſeries, your fatal compliance with an imperious father's command has heaped on him, who now addreſſes you. Too well am I acquainted with the deceits, that have been put in practice, to render you unfaithful to him you were affianced to. Yet, oh my Julia! my affianced wife! before I leave a country for ever, which you have been the fatal means of rendering hateful to me,—one interview (on my knees I beg it) grant the wretched Montcalm. It will be the laſt, I ſwear ſolemnly to thee, I ſhall ever aſk. Think, before you reſolve againſt me, that you owe ſome ſmall re-

paration to the man, whom you have undone. Think too his boſom, ſwelling with reſentment againſt the author of his miſeries, will, without you ſoften it, burſt forth into a revenge, which only the hope, that Julia is ſtill compaſſionate, reſtrains from falling heavy on her cruel parent. Oh! that Montcalm ſhould have need of more than one intreaty, to induce Julia de Clifford to ſee him. But my fears are vain: Though ſhe is Mortagne's, (curſe on his name!) ſhe has not forgotten humanity.

MONTCALM."

" The peruſal of this letter tore open the wounds, which had barely been cloſed. The imprudent requeſt it contained, I ſhould not a moment have heſitated on giving a denial to: But when I conſidered the threat, it intimated againſt a father, in caſe of a refuſal, I ſhuddered with horror; and filial tenderneſs put every ſuggeſtion, that prudence or duty

could raiſe to flight: And I determined, at all hazards, to ſee this raſh young man.

" Here let me, in juſtice to myſelf, declare, that not one ſingle idea of ſelfiſh gratification, at ſeeing again the man, to whom exiſtence without was irkſome, influenced my compliance.

" Thus fatally compelled, by tenderneſs to my parent, whoſe peace, or life, I was anxious ſhould not be diſturbed, by the reproaches, or violence, of an unhappy youth, to whoſe miſery he had been inſtrumental,—I wrote a few ſhort lines to Montcalm, to ſignify my conſent, on condition its being the laſt of his viſits; and appointed the day following, for my receiving him at the Hall.

" He came. I had previouſly inſiſted on Agnes remaining in the apartment, during the whole of his viſit. I obſerved, as I delivered into the hand of that diſcreet woman the fatal letter, her opinion of the anſwer I

ſhould return; and ſaw the concern, which took poſſeſſion of her features, as ſhe learnt my imprudent compliance with its requeſt. But, as it was too late to remonſtrate with me, ſhe would not pain me by expreſſing her ſentiments.

" It was in that remarkable apartment, through which you effectuated your deliverance, my dear Elfrida," continued the Counteſs," that I received Montcalm. I had been arming myſelf with reſolution, to hear with fortitude and firmneſs, the reproaches, and tenderneſs of a man, yet more fondly loved, than became Mortagne's wife; and had ordered to be brought to me my beloved Alfred, and Matilda, to ſtrengthen my conſtancy. ' Oh! my children,' cried I, ' let the ſight of you ſupport your unhappy mother, in this ſevere trial! Ah! let the remembrance of the duty, I owe your father, ſteel my boſom againſt the tenderneſs of him, who but too largely ſhares this heart!' I had juſt ſent them

them from me, when Montcalm was announced.

" In vain I ſummoned up all my courage to meet him, without betraying the emotion to which his preſence gave riſe. I had aroſe to receive him; but finding my trembling limbs unable to ſupport me, I reſumed my ſeat, and bowed to him as he entered.

" Willing to relieve my embarraſſment, Montcalm affected not to obſerve my agitation; and advancing with an air at once reſpectful, and tender, he took my hand, and preſſed it to his lips. I perceived his tremble, as he held it; and mine, I am afraid, was not leſs agitated. ' I am come, madam,' ſaid he, ' to bid you a long farewell, ere I quit for ever a country, which now has no charm to detain me. I thank you for the permiſſion, you have granted me, of taking it, ere I depart; and for a condeſcenſion ſo ſoothing to my heart, I now promiſe, that no remembrance of injuries received, ſhall prompt me to moleſt thoſe, who

are dear to Julia.' I bowed, and reaſſuming my courage; 'And has not De Clifford power to detain his friend?' inquired I, willing to enter into ſome converſation, which might prevent the leading to a ſubject I dreaded: 'Will thoſe eſtates, which give me leave to congratulate you on the poſſeſſion of, require your fixed reſidence on them?'

"Without at firſt replying to my inquiry, Montcalm ſighed deeply: then, gazing upon me, with mournful tenderneſs; 'The brother of Julia, though dear to me beyond expreſſion, is a companion, that now only adds to the miſery of the loſt Montcalm, by perpetually reminding him of a ſiſter, too dearly, too tenderly beloved, ever to be eraſed from this breaſt. I go, madam, to a country, where no traces of her I love, can preſent themſelves, but thoſe which, imprinted in too indelible characters, ever to be obliterated, will ſink with the faithful tablet, which contains them, to the peaceful grave.' There was an air of calm though ſettled melancholy, that accompanied

panied theſe words, which affected me beyond meaſure. I had prepared my heart to meet, with firmneſs, all the violence, that the diſappointment of an ardent generous paſſion could excite; but the manly ſenſibility he diſplayed,—ſuffering, yet unwilling to wound me, by vain reproaches, was more than I could bear. In vain I eſſayed to ſpeak; I felt almoſt choked with my emotion.

" Once I had pleaſed myſelf,' continued he, ' with the thought, that Julia would have been a partaker in thoſe gifts, which fortune has heaped upon me: But how (his voice faltered) how have my hopes been blaſted!' He pauſed for a moment, to recover his voice, which trembled greatly: Then, with an air affectingly ſolemn, ' Think not, my Julia,' for ſtill muſt I call you ſo, as you are mine in the eye of heaven, ' that I am come to pain your gentle nature, by expreſſing to you my vain regrets. I wiſh to be aſſured by you, that you are not unhappy with Mortagne: That aſſurance would ſooth my

ſorrows, when parted from you, perhaps, for ever.'

" I tried to command my voice, ſufficient to give him the ſatisfaction, he generouſly aſked; but I could only articulate ſome broken ſentences, which were ſcarcely audible. He ſaw me greatly affected; and he aroſe, and walked to the window, with a diſordered air.

" Agnes now, willing to relieve me, aſked Montcalm, if he would not wiſh to ſee the children.

" He ſtarted; and I ſaw the colour ruſh to his cheek. I beckoned her, not to bring them; but, perceiving my deſign, he prevented me. ' Yes, yes,' cried he with quickneſs, ' I can bear to ſee them: Are they not my Julia's? *Mine* did I ſay?' He leaned againſt the wall, and covered his face with both his hands; whilſt a ſigh, the moſt bitter, burſt from his heart.

" The

"The dear babes were now brought in. Alfred, delighted at his martial dreſs, had climbed upon his knee, in order to examine it; and had half unſheathed his ſword; but whilſt Montcalm, to pleaſe him, drew it wholly from its ſcabbard, the dazzling brightneſs frightened Matilda, who clung to me for protection. He kiſſed the ſweet boy; yet his eyes were directed to my little girl, who bore the ſtrongeſt reſemblance to her unhappy mother. He gazed upon her, then upon me, as ſhe ſtood on my lap, her little arms encircling my neck, with a meaning, I could not but underſtand. I felt my colour come, and go; and I too late repented my imprudent compliance, in granting this interview. I bent my head over the lovely child, to conceal how much I was affected. He took her from my arms, and claſped her to his breaſt, with paſſionate tenderneſs. I ſaw the big tears fall faſt from his eyes. 'Oh! Julia, Julia,' murmured he, 'thou haſt undone me!' The ſcene grew too affecting: I entreated him to be gone. He once more kiſſed

the dear babe, and gently placing her upon the floor, 'Go, ſweet Matilda,' ſaid Montcalm; 'and mayeſt thou be like thy mother, beauteous and excellent; but not like her ſeduced from ſolemn vows!' Then, ſeizing my hand, in an agony of grief, he placed it to his heart. 'Julia,' cried he, in a broken and hurried manner, 'I would not have thee repent this indulgence to my ſorrows; and I feel that I muſt leave thee now. Farewell! adieu for ever!' He flew out of the room; nor had I time to anſwer, ere he was departed.

"I remained, for ſome minutes, buried in gloomy reflections; my vacant eye fixed, unconſcious of the object it reſted on. My ſenſes ſeemed unſettled. I ſtarted from my ſeat. 'What? gone for ever, ſaid he?' Agnes with ſilent grief ſtood mourning by me. She viewed me with tender pity. I came to a recollection of myſelf; and hiding at once my weakneſs, and miſery, in her faithful boſom, I gave a looſe to my tears. 'Oh God!'

God!' exclaimed I, 'what a fate is mine! To find that the man, I loved above my life, to whom I had given my vows the moſt ſolemn, exiſts; and to feel myſelf another's,—the wife of Mortagne;—joined a to man, to whom I cannot give my confidence!—To be for ever deprived of the delightful intercourſe of hearts, united by love!—To look forward to a joyleſs exiſtence, being ſpent without friendſhip, eſteem, or affection. Ah Mortagne! what a heart have you deprived of felicity!—felicity which, young as I am, I feel ſo high a conception of!—And is my life, then, to paſs a cheerleſs void?' Agnes, who had by turns ſoothed, conſoled, and compaſſionated my diſtreſs, now interrupted me, with a ſolemn and ſevere aſpect. 'I ſee not (ſaid ſhe) the wife, the tender prudent Julia; the daughter, who, amidſt her bittereſt diſtreſs, could by her ſmiles encourage, and revive her afflicted parent, who had injured her;—the virtuous and prudent conſort of Mortagne;—the tender mother of two angel children. I ſee I have loſt that

friend, to whoſe virtues I have looked up, with admiration, and delight. But why ſhould I complain, when thoſe engaging innocents have loſt their power, to engage their mother's love?—A fatal paſſion ſhuts her heart againſt claims ſo powerful,—ſo endearing, as thoſe of nature!' Haſtily, at this bitter reproach, I withdrew myſelf from her arms; and, caſting upon her a look full of cenſure, 'Cruel friend! unkind Agnes! is it at ſuch a time as this, thou canſt find a heart to wound thy friend?' 'Yes, madam, (replied ſhe, unmoved by my reproach) it is the duty of a friend to recal you to a ſenſe of that, which you have forgotten. Enough has been yielded to ſorrow—to vain—to uſeleſs regret,—for the loſs of a man, whom your tears cannot now make yours. Think how unbecoming the reflections that have eſcaped you, are to the wife of Mortagne.' Then taking my children in her arms; 'Come, ſaid ſhe, unfortunate babes that ye are, diſregarded by a parent, who ſhould idolize ſuch treaſures,—come to a friend, who will render

you

you thoſe pleaſing duties, which a mother refuſes you. I will be your protector,—your real parent.'

" She was taking them from the apartment, when, rouſed from the ſtupefaction, which had kept me ſilent, during this laſt remonſtrance, I ſprung forwards to prevent her, and ſnatching the beloved infants from her officious boſom, I placed them to my own, and preſſing them cloſe to my heart, as fearful Agnes would force them from me, I by turns careſſed, and wept over them. 'No, never my ſweet, my beloved children,' murmured I, with a degree of jealous indignation, 'Never ſhall you have cauſe to complain of your mother's want of care; nor will you need another's protection, while heaven gives me to you."

" Agnes ſeemed to enjoy this ſcene, though the tears flowed from her eyes. I darted a reſentful look at her, nor would I ſuffer her to aſſiſt in my endearments.

" She

"She now threw herſelf at my feet. 'Forgive me, madam; pardon, deareſt, moſt beloved of ladies, the preſumption of thy ſervant, in daring to reflect on thy conduct, which has ever been the moſt exemplary. What method but this could I hope would ſucceed, in turning your mind from the retroſpection of your ſorrows? Ah! think not your Agnes did not feel for you, when even ſhe appeared moſt cruel. Yet, if I have ſucceeded, though I ſhould ſtill labour under your diſpleaſure,—your returning peace will be my reward.' My heart was melted; I raiſed her in my arms. 'Forgive you, Agnes!' ſaid I, 'Ah! my beſt, my deareſt friend,—it is I ſhould aſk forgiveneſs, I, indeed, merited the reproofs you gave me; and ſhould have received them with contrition. But I have another pardon to aſk. You have opened mine eyes to a ſenſe of my guilt: Leave me, therefore, my friend, to meditate with the Father of Mercies, for remiſſion of thoſe offences, which require ſolitude, and re-

repentance; ere I can be reconciled to myſelf.'

"Having retired to my cloſet, I threw myſelf on my knees, and put up prayers to heaven, to ſtrengthen my mind againſt the evils, that might attend me; beſeeching it to take from my heart thoſe deep, thoſe poignant regrets, which were injurious to the duty, I owed my children, and my Lord: That no action might tarniſh the luſtre of a life, which, blighted as it was in its youthful dreams of mundane felicity, ſhould now be dedicated to God, and the duties of my ſtation. I aroſe; my heart was lightened: and reflecting on the joys that ſtill lay in ſtore for me, in diffuſing happineſs around, the many claims that now appeared to demand my attention, took from my mind that frightful apathy, that diſtaſte of exiſtence, which before had filled my ſoul.

"I recapitulated my duties. I had to cheer the heart of a deſponding father by the conſtancy and readineſs which I diſplayed in allevi-

alleviating the weight of his ſorrows. I had the eſteem of my huſband to preſerve, by my reſpect, and obſervance of the duties of my ſtation. I had children to attend to, who claimed every maternal care: To chaſe from the eye of poverty the bitter tear; and, by a ſtrict performance of theſe ſeveral duties, prepare my ſoul to meet, without ſhrinking, that awful moment, in which it ſhould have to render up its great and final accounts. I enjoyed, by anticipation, thoſe calm, thoſe tranquil pleaſures, which a mind at peace with itſelf can only give. My mind recovered its proper tones, and a delicious ſerenity pervaded my boſom. My heart dilated with gratitude to heaven, for the ſenſations it imparted: For to heaven alone did it belong; and angels, in pity to mankind, impart an emanation of their divinity, to meliorate the bitterneſſes of humanity.

" It was after a day ſpent with Agnes, and my children, my boſom fraught with the moſt

virtuous

virtuous intentions,—that, when left to myſelf, my ſoul, raiſed above itſelf, partook not of the earthly particles which adhere to its eſſence in this mortal frame, and remained abſorbed in heavenly contemplations, that Mortagne entered the room.

" I aroſe to meet him, with that heartfelt complaiſancy, which the ſenſations I experienced, had excited. But how was I ſhocked, on obſerving his countenance inflamed with anger, and a ſullen and fierce reſentment hang heavy on his brow. ' Sit down, madam,' cried the Earl ſternly, repulſing my offered embrace; ' your time for playing on my weakneſs is now no more.' He need not have bade me ſeat myſelf; I could not ſupport myſelf at this unmerited reproach.

" He drew a chair oppoſite mine; and, without regarding my importunities, to know the cauſe of this unkindneſs, he ſat, for ſome time abſorbed in gloomy and terrific ſilence. Then, gazing upon me with a ſcrutinizing

eye,

eye, he demanded who had that day viſited me. He ſaw the confuſion, that reigned within my boſom, at this alarming queſtion; and his nether lip quivered with paſſion. 'You ſeem confounded, madam,' ſaid he, with a frightful earneſtneſs. 'Some huſbands are too inquiſitive.'

"My heart beat quick with dreadful apprehenſion;—yet, conſcious of my innocence, and the integrity of my ſoul, I dared to name Montcalm. 'Montcalm!' cried Mortagne, ſtarting from his ſeat; 'and dareſt thou, abandoned woman, name that infamous ſeducer of thy honour, to a huſband, who took thee portionleſs as thou wert, and raiſed thee to a ſtate of rank and ſplendor, beyond even what thy ambitious ſire preſumed to look for, from thy inſidious charms? Honours, which thou haſt diſgraced, and for ever tarniſhed? Curſed be that hour, (continued he, raiſing his voice) which gave thy fatal beauties to theſe arms! Blind, blind infatuation, that ſaw not the reluctance, with which thou gaveſt that

that perſon, which had been another's;—but let me eagerly ſeek the deſtruction of my honour, in the poſſeſſion of thy fatal charms! Ah! dearly ſhalt thou pay the treſpaſs of thy duty.'

" Theſe diſhonourable unmerited accuſations called forth my courage, inſtead of ſubduing it. I wept not: And had not a love for my innocent children prevailed over my pride, I would have diſdained to anſwer charges ſo groſs. But their remembrance ſoftened my heart. ' Forbear, my Lord,' cried I with firmneſs, ' to wound your honour, in doubting mine. That once I loved Montcalm, I ſcruple not to avow: And that, had I not ſuppoſed him dead, no force on earth ſhould have compelled me to have given to another thoſe vows, which I had ſolemnly pledged to him. But that more than a pure and virtuous paſſion warmed our hearts, I take the holy Powers to witneſs: Or that, ſince I gave my hand to your Lordſhip, I have acted unbecoming your wife.' ' Your

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permitting Montcalm to viſit you, in the abſence of your huſband, for inſtance,' interrupted the Earl, with a diſdainful and incredulous ſmile, 'was highly becoming my wife. My wife! did I ſay?—no longer ſhalt thou bear that diſhonoured title.'

"Whatever cruelties you may chooſe to inflict upon me, my Lord,' returned I calmly, 'Heaven is my judge, that I merit them not, for any offence that I have ſhewn to you. It was to ſhield a parent from the wrath of Montcalm, that made me permit his viſit. Well you know, that, on hearing he was to return with my brother, I choſe to retire from court. It was from him I fled.' 'Say rather,' furiouſly interrupted the Earl, 'you fled, more ſecurely to enjoy your guilty paſſion in ſolitude; or why ſuffer him to viſit you? But the whole of your infamous conduct is now divulged: Bertrand, that faithful friend, has acquainted me with your vileneſs.' 'Bertrand!' cried I, with trembling indignation,

tion, 'has that deceitful villain dared to aſperſe my fame?'

"At that moment I heard a noiſe from behind the wainſcot; and, to my utter amazement, I perceived one of the pannels move up, as if on a groove, and the figure of a man, clad in complete armour, appeared. His hands and part of his armour were ſtained with blood;—and, on lifting up his vizor, he diſcovered a viſage, beyond deſcription terrible. A gloomy ſadneſs hung upon his brow. Ah! never ſhall I forget his features. His complexion was pale and ſqualid; his forehead high, and projecting over two ſmall eyes, which expreſſed a cold relentleſs ferocity of nature, that no caſe, however pitiable, could move; with a noſe ſharp, and prominent, that nearly met his peaked chin; joined to a form large, and muſcular; which altogether rendered his appearance terrific beyond expreſſion. "The deed is done, my Lord, ſaid the wretch, in a hollow tone of voice. 'Tis well,' replied the Earl, with evi-

evident ſatisfaction. 'Your quick diſpatch merits my thanks; and a large reward attends your ſervices. Where is Stephen?' 'Awaiting your Lordſhip's orders, in the place appointed. Shall we bring the body in?' The Earl having nodded aſſent, the man diſappeared; and the wall again was cloſed.

"My faculties, during this ſcene, were frozen with fear. I remember, I had juſt power ſufficient, to throw myſelf at the feet of the Earl, and cling around him for protection:—Then, looking up to him, with an imploring countenance, I tried to expreſs thoſe fears, which ſpeech denied me to give utterance to.

"Mortagne ſurveyed me with a ſavage joy. 'You tremble, Julia,' ſaid he. 'What is it you apprehend? He whom you moſt would wiſh to ſee, is come to viſit you; nor will your tyrant huſband now interrupt your endearments.' He had ſcarcely finiſhed this myſteri-

myſterious ſpeech, ere I beheld what I now perceived to be the canvas, which covered the wall, again raiſed,—and the object of my former terror return, accompanied by another, who exhibited, if poſſible, a more hideous countenance than his companion. Having made a paſſage through the wall, wide enough to admit them both, they entered the apartment, dragging, with ſome difficulty, a long bundle, (the form of which appeared like a human figure) carefully wrapt up; which they placed upon the floor. Then, retiring backward a few paces, they ſtood with arms folded, as if waiting farther orders: Whilſt a ſilence the moſt dreadful, for ſome minutes, prevailed.

" I ſurveyed this terrific ſcene, in ſpeechleſs horror; and awaited an explanation of it, in a ſtate of agonizing ſuſpenſe ſurpaſſing all deſcription. My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I ſcarcely reſpired. I eſſayed to ſupplicate for mercy; but only my lips moved. I viewed, with direful apprehenſions,

ſions, the object, which lay on the floor. I thought I perceived it ſtir; and a hollow noiſe iſſue forth. A ſhriek eſcaped me; and, unknowing what I did, I tried to diſengage myſelf from the arms of the Earl; who, however, held me too faſt, to ſuffer me to eſcape. He ſeemed to enjoy my terrors. 'You go not yet, madam,' ſaid he: 'Your puniſhment, (and he laid a frightful emphaſis on the word) is only begun. It it fit you ſhould ſhare the fortune of your lover.' Revenge lighted up his countenance. I ſhrank, with horror, from his graſp. I ventured to turn my imploring eyes towards the two ruffians, to diſcover the fate that awaited me; and with a faint hope of tracing ſome expreſſion, that denoted pity. But their looks were dark, and lowering; and with eyes bent towards the ground, they regarded with cold indifference my agonies;—and ſeemed only waiting for the word being given, to execute the dreadful finiſh to a buſineſs, which already I ſuſpected to have been but too bloody. 'Come,' ſaid the Earl; 'we but delay time.' The mercileſs villains

ſprang

ſprang forwards, as I thought, to ſeize me. I now threw my arms around the knees of the Earl, and knelt to him for pity. 'Remove that cloak, Hubert,' continued the Earl unmoved, 'and let this woman ſee the man, whom ſhe prefers to her lord.' I now no longer doubted. The dreadful myſtery was diſcloſed. Petrified with grief, with horror, at the ſad certainty of what I dreaded, I felt transfixed to the ſpot. I knelt,—I gazed with wild diſtraction, whilſt the ruffian obeyed his ſavage Lord,—and uncovering the body, expoſed the yet bleeding corſe of the murdered Montcalm!

"Pale, and disfigured with blood, ſcarce could be diſtinguiſhed in his face, the once eminently handſome features, which adorned it. Yet the dreſs he wore, which was a Highland uniform, at once proclaimed it to my agonized heart, to be Montcalm.

"Mortagne, now pointing to the breathleſs body of the unhappy youth, turned to-

wards me, and demanded, with a taunting air, how now I liked his graceful perſon. 'Go to him,' continued he. 'I promiſed you, you know, not to diſturb your careſſes. What! ſo ſoon turn cold upon your lover! Fie! how unlike this is, the tender ſympathizing Julia! Ah! it was not thus you met this morning.' I heard him not:—My ſenſes fled. My brain ſeemed to whirl around. My temples burnt like fire; whilſt a raging fever crept through every vein. For ſeveral months I was unconſcious of what was paſſing; and from that inſenſibility I awoke, only to endure yet freſh ſcenes of horror.

"Imagine my grief,—my diſtraction,—when on my recovery I found myſelf ſtretched on a miſerable bed;—no attendant near me; and encloſed in this gloomy abode. On one ſide ſtood a table, with a crucifix, and a ſmall taper, which diffuſed a dull and glimmering light; and only ſerved to expoſe the wretchedneſs of the priſon, I was placed in. I ſhrieked aloud for aſſiſtance: but my voice alone

alone was anſwered by its echoes. I again cloſed my eyes; vainly hoping, I had not recovered from the direful impreſſion of ſome frightful dream. But fancy refuſed to aid the deception, I was willing to abandon myſelf to; and a confuſed recollection of paſt events flaſhed the dreadful conviction on my mind,—that, loſt to my children, friends, liberty,—to a living tomb I was condemned. This dreadful truth again reſtored me to that happy inſenſibility, from which I had awaked; and on my ſecond recovery, I found the hated Bertrand ſeated by my couch; holding in his hand ſome remedies, he had been adminiſtering. Too exhauſted, and weak, to expreſs thoſe emotions of reſentment, which ſwelled my heart, at the memory of his baſeneſs, I only waved my hand, for him to leave me; and by my countenance ſhewed that his preſence inſpired me with contempt and horror. But diſregarding my emotions of diſguſt, he viewed me with a ſmile of triumph. 'Your ſituation is now altered, madam,' ſaid the villain. 'To me your Lord has deliver-

ed up his faithful wife; and, for your breach of chaſtity to him, conſigns you to eternal oblivion. Your friends are taught to believe you dead. Your fame to the world is unſullied; as my patron wiſhed not to divulge your ſhame.' Then, ſtamping with his foot, 'Beneath this ſtone (continued he) is buried the partner of your crime.' My blood curdled with horror. I gaſped for breath.

'Oh! why,' cried I, claſping my hands with agony, 'why was I not alſo ſacrificed, with that unfortunate Montcalm? But the fate I am reſerved for, is a refinement of cruelty, in my inhuman Lord.' 'No,' interrupted the odious Bertrand, 'to me are you indebted for the preſervation of your exiſtence: To my interceſſions do you owe it. You were doomed to be alſo ſacrified with your lover; but my entreaties to ſpare you prevailed.' 'I thank not thy officious zeal,' cried I, caſting upon him, at the ſame time, a look of abhorrence, and contempt. Rather would I ſuffer the crueleſt of deaths, to be inflicted on this body,

body, than live, and be expoſed to thy continual inſults. It is to thee I owe,' continued I, 'that I am condemned to waſte a loathſome exiſtence, in the gloom of eternal night; ſeparated from all I love. It is to thee an unhappy innocent youth owes his death: and his injured ſpirit will nightly haunt thy guilty couch. O well, well do you know my innocence. Ah! but for thee, ſtill might I have been guiltleſs in Mortagne's eyes: Still happy in the ſociety of thoſe I love. Oh, my children! and muſt I no more be bleſſed with your endearing ſociety? No more watch o'er your dawning virtues, your infant graces, with maternal tranſport?' Tears came to my relief: I gave a looſe to the moſt extravagant emotions of grief: and turning to Bertrand, who began to evince ſome ſigns of pity, 'If,' cried I, 'you are not loſt to all feeling of humanity, tell me, do my children live; and not like their unhappy mother, labour under the Earl's diſpleaſure? Say that they eſcape his cruelties; tell me

they are happy; and I will ſpare that curſe, which riſes to my tongue.'

" He had the charity to ſatisfy me of their ſafety, under the protection of Agnes; and of the Earl's departure from the Caſtle. 'And now, madam,' ſaid he, aſſuming a look of importance, 'on yourſelf depends your fate. It is in my power to reſtore you to that world, you are taken from; to thoſe friends who deplore your loſs; and to thoſe children who require your cares.'

" Speak!' exclaimed I, ſtarting from my couch, 'tell me what you require, for ſo much bliſs: No gift, however great, ſhall be denied: I have friends, who will, with bleſſings, pay it you.' 'I ſeek not worldly grandeur,' ſaid the artful fiend, ſoftening his voice, and trying to aſſume a look of tenderneſs: 'Your love is all I aſk.' I ſunk at once from that pitch of happineſs, to which his offers had raiſed me, into the moſt dire deſpair. 'Be gone, deceitful wretch,' cried

I,

I, in a voice almoſt choked with indignation; 'and add not, by thy abhorred preſence, to my bitter calamities. Rather would I endure a puniſhment, ſeverer than even what I now experience, than liſten, for one moment, to thy odious paſſion.' 'It is well, madam,' cried he, darting on me a look of fierce reſentment; 'your obſtinacy will prove its own reward; and, perhaps, when I am little diſpoſed to grant, you will ſue for that love, you now deſpiſe.'

"The only anſwer I vouchſafed, was a look, indicating indignant contempt and averſion. As he left me, he pointed to a bundle, in one corner of my priſon. 'There, madam, (ſaid he, with an ironical air) there are the habiliments, which you will pleaſe to wear. No vain trappings will now adorn you, ſince ſolitude is your choice.' He left me; and I aroſe, with the faint hope of diſcovering ſome methods of regaining my liberty.

" The apparel appointed for me was a looſe gown, made of coarſe black camblet, faſtened round the waiſt by a white cord; to which was hung a crucifix, and beads. The ſleeves were wide, and reached half way down my arm; and a long veil of the ſame materials, compoſed my dreſs. The change in my appearance affected me but little: Parted from my friends, my children,—lamenting, with unceaſing grief, the murdered youth, I fondly loved, my ſable garments correſponded with the melancholy of my ſoul.

" After a fruitleſs and wearifome ſearch into every crevice, and entrance, into the horrid tomb I was encloſed in, without being able to form the moſt diſtant hope of effecting a paſſage, through the vaſt and impenetrable walls which immured me,—I caſt my eyes up to the high arched windows, and ſighed, as I ſaw the impoſſibility of being able to climb the vaulted walls, which ſupported them. Then, caſting myſelf, in deſpair, on the

the grave of Montcalm, I vainly called on his brave ſpirit to redreſs my wrongs.

" Day after day was I inſulted by the repetition of the deteſtable love of Father Bertrand, as he brought me my ſcanty allowance of proviſion. Yet, little as it was, it more than ſufficed; and but for the animating thought, that ſome unforeſeen circumſtance might again reſtore me to the world, I would have entirely refuſed the means of preſerving an exiſtence, which was become odious to me.

" Sometimes, when abandoned by that hope, which for years ſuſtained me, I would ſink into liſtleſſneſs and deſpair; or plunged into a melancholy, the moſt profound, would dare to murmur againſt the Author of my being, for creating me but to ſuffer.

" Each day I watered, with my tears, the grave of Montcalm; and received a ſenſation of melancholy pleaſure, ſcarcely to be de-

ſcribed, in the performance of that tribute to the memory of him, who had ſacrificed his life to an unfortunate paſſion.

" Think, my Elfrida, what muſt be my ſufferings,—confined in this manſion of the dead,—denied the bleſſings of all ſociety, but that of a villain, who was the primary cauſe of my ſeparation from all I held dear on earth, and expoſed to his infamous paſſion, which, by ſeeming to ſuppoſe me culpable, he fancied himſelf authorized to avow. Ah my God! let me obliterate, if poſſible, the impreſſion of ſcenes ſo dreadful.

" Some years had elapſed, when my perſecutor, wearied with continually urging a paſſion, which made no impreſſion, but diſguſt, on the object who created it,—and time, aided by affliction, having dimmed the luſtre of thoſe few charms, I was once allowed to poſſeſs,—relieved me from the horror, the mention of his love inſpired. As the impatience of youth abated, with my increaſing years,

years, I took ſhelter in the mild comforts of religion, which ſubdued the bitterneſs of my grief; and began to ſubmit to my wretched fate, with reſignation. I looked forward, with exulting hope, to that period, when my ſoul ſhould be emancipated from its earthly tenement;—yet a fond regret would ſometimes pervade my heart;—ſtill would it hanker for that world, which contained my Alfred and Matilda.

" I ſometimes thought that Bertrand, as he brought me my daily pittance, began to view my patient ſuffering, with compaſſion and remorſe; and would ſeem pleaſed, when, at any time, my countenance betrayed that calm reſignation, which my religion inſpired, inſtead of that air of deep deſpondency with which it was often marked. Having long ceaſed to upbraid him, or even to hold any converſe, after all intercourſe had been broken off between him and the Earl, and I could gain no intelligence of my family,—he one day aſked me, if I had no curioſity to

know the manner of the Earl's being made acquainted with my paſſion for Montcalm.

" I ſignified that a communication would gratify me. He ſeated himſelf, and proceeded to inform me, that Roſa, my chief woman, had betrayed me to the Earl; and that every tranſaction, which had paſſed, previous to my marriage, was known to him. The vows that had been taken by Montcalm and me,—our meeting on the night we took them, at the chapel of De Clifford,—his ſuppoſed death,—my grief and diſtraction at the news, the reluctance with which I conſented to an union with Mortagne, altogether ſo excited his ſuſpicions of my conſtancy, that, doubtful of my motives for chooſing retirement, precautions were taken to detect me, in caſe I proved falſe to that faith, I owed my Lord. A ſliding door was accordingly made through the wainſcot, and canvas was ſubſtituted in the room of the ſculpture, and ſo artfully contrived, that, without the cloſeſt inſpection, the deception could not be diſcovered: behind this

this ſpies were planted, to overhear every converſation that took place. By means of that fatal letter of Montcalm's being incautiouſly dropt by Agnes, the Earl was acquainted with his imprudent requeſt; and my anſwer to it was diſcovered, by a ſubſequent converſation being overheard, which paſſed between me and her.

"You know, madam,' continued Bertrand, at this part of his relation, 'what followed; nor need I pain you, by a repetition of theſe diſtreſsful events.' I ſighed deeply, and nodded aſſent; on which he proceeded. 'The Earl, who had determined on your death, in conſequence of your guilt, now wavered as he beheld the diſtraction you were plunged in. At that moment of irreſolution, I entered, I implored, entreated, for the preſervation of your life; and I prevailed. Sentence of eternal oblivion was paſſed upon you; and to me was committed the guardianſhip of your perſon. A ſleepy potion was adminiſtered, and you were conveyed, through a ſecret paſ-

ſage,

ſage, to this oriel, which leads immediately to the monaſtery, that adjoins the Caſtle walls; and a waxen figure was ſubſtituted in your room. My Lord having, in conſideration of my ſervices, been pleaſed to appoint me ſuperior of that holy manſion, I remained after he had entirely quitted the Caſtle, and readily accepted my important charge.'

" He ceaſed; and, without waiting for the comments, his guilty conſcience whiſpered I ſhould make on his ſtory, abruptly retired.

" Though I was well convinced, he was the diabolical inſtrument of my deſtruction, and that his malefic inventions had poiſoned my lord's ear againſt me; yet I felt how little now remonſtrance or reproach would ſerve my cauſe; and, therefore, at our next interview forbore either. My forbearance ſeemed to pleaſe him; and ſince that time he has relaxed the ſeverities of my confinement, and ſupplied me with books of devotion; which

which have acted as a balm to my deeply wounded mind."

The Counteſs pauſed; and Elfrida, who had liſtened to her affecting narrative, with a ſympathy, and intereſt, that prevented her from giving the ſmalleſt interruption,—now, in an animated and lively manner, expreſſed the admiration, that her noble conduct had inſpired her with, and her grief, that ſuch virtue ſhould only be rewarded, by a cruelty the moſt unprecedented.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE day began to break; the ſun had now commenced his orient courſe, and darting his feeble rays through the thick barred windows, that lighted the oriel, dulled the glimmer of the almoſt extinguiſhed lamp, which burnt upon the table, and ſpread a cheerleſs gloom around.

As the two friends were comparing their mutual misfortunes, and planning ſchemes for their liberation, and Ellen, whoſe curioſity had repelled the attacks of drowſineſs, whilſt Lady Mortagne was relating a hiſtory, teeming with terrifying events, now had given way

to

to a comfortable repoſe, their attention was turned towards a ſubject, yet more alarming than a contemplation of their ſituation, by hearing the lock of the door, that led to the monaſtery, tried to be unturned, at that unuſual hour.

The Counteſs made ſigns for the terrified Elfrida to be gone; who waited not for a ſecond ſignal to fly, with all poſſible ſpeed, from the danger of being ſeen by the deteſted Bertrand: for he, ſhe entertained not a doubt but it was.

The Counteſs having time to cloſe the door, through which Elfrida had eſcaped, now awaited the coming of her holy viſitant, with apparent compoſure.

The lock, which had for ſometime reſiſted the efforts of the hand that attempted to turn it, now gave way; and the door opening, there appeared, not the expected Bertrand, but a youth of the moſt prepoſſeſſing mien; who

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who ſtarting backwards, with evident aſtoniſhment, at the ſight of the Counteſs, exhibited a ſurpriſe equal to her's at the encounter.

A doubtful ſenſation of pleaſure filled the boſom of Lady Mortagne. She hoped, ſhe prayed, the youth was not her enemy: When, ſeeming to recover from the ſtate of embarraſſment, her preſence had excited, he, with a manner the moſt gentle, advanced, and, in a voice beyond expreſſion ſoothing, tried to diſſipate her fears.

"Though I muſt confeſs, madam," ſaid the ſtranger, "that I have been diſappointed in my expectations of meeting with a Lady, whoſe ſituation bears a ſimilarity, in ſome reſpects, to your's, and muſt feel a diſappointment, in which my heart, as well as compaſſion, has an equal ſhare; yet, believe me, the knowledge of your misfortunes, and unjuſt detention in this hideous priſon, makes me, with tranſport, offer you thoſe ſervices, which the

the unmerited hardſhips, you have ſo long borne, lay claim to. On me, madam, therefore," continued he, "rely for protection, for deliverance."

"Whoever thou art, generous youth," cried the Counteſs, with emotions of rapturous delight, "that ſeems not ignorant of my misfortunes, and, like a guardian angel, comeſt to reſcue me from them; ere I depart from theſe deteſted walls, ſuffer me to include under your protection a Lady, who, like me, is a priſoner in this hated Caſtle; and who fled at your approach."

The ſtranger's eyes ſparkled with joy. "Speak, tell me, madam," exclaimed he, with eager haſte, "who, and where is this Lady?" "The Lady," replied the Counteſs, "is my niece." The countenance of the young man fell; but his compaſſion being excited, he took the direction, that Lady Mortagne gave him, and ſeizing the lamp, haſtily left the cloiſter.

Elfrida,

Elfrida, who had fled, with all the haſte her trembling ſteps would admit of from the impending danger, had gained the aſcent of ſtairs, which led from the oriel, when ſhe heard the haſty tread of ſome one mounting the ſteps; and, as ſhe doubted not, in purſuit of her. She gave herſelf up for loſt, as ſhe recollected, with horror, that the door which led from them was cloſed. Yet, impelled by a latent hope of fear giving her ſtrength to ſurmount that difficulty, ſhe proceeded, with a beating and palpitating heart, till ſhe had reached the laſt ſtep. A ſmall ray of light, gleaming through the crevices of the door, which ſtopped her farther paſſage, and perceiving a broad flat nail of braſs, that projected conſiderably beyond thoſe which ſtudded the door, prompted the pleaſing hope, that this might prove a ſpring-lock. And remembering, that on the other ſide there were bars, which, could ſhe gain time enough, would ſecure her at leaſt, from preſent violence, ſhe, with a mixture of doubt and fear, applied her trembling hand to the ſuppoſed faſten-

faſtening; which to her inexpreſſible joy, gave way.

She had now to cloſe and ſecure the heavy door, through which ſhe had effected her paſſage; and now ſhe diſtinctly heard the ſteps of her purſuer, who ſeemed to have arrived at the laſt winding. Her ſtrength almoſt exhauſted, ſhe eſſayed, with eager haſte, to ſhut to the door, whoſe ruſted hinges with difficulty gave way to her weak efforts; and had nearly accompliſhed her wiſh, when, with a force ſuperior, ſhe found it puſhed back. Overcome with dread, and terror, our heroine now ſunk almoſt lifeleſs to the ground.

It was too dark for the ſtranger to diſtinguiſh whom it was, his ſupporting arms ſuſtained inſenſible.

Pitying the ſituation he had, by his incaution, reduced her to,—he tried every method to re-aſſure her fleeting ſenſes, by repeated offers of ſervice, and protection: But ſhe was in-

incapable of receiving the comfort, he intended to convey to her doubting mind.

Finding himſelf in a narrow dark paſſage, where he could obtain no relief,—and uncertain but the door, which fronted him, might lead to the danger ſhe fled from,—he took her in his arms, and carefully proceeded to deſcend the ſteps, which led to the vaulted apartment.

During the interim, the Counteſs, who had in the moment of joy, at the proſpect of deliverance, forgotten that the youth, to whom ſhe had ſo unguardedly given up her kinſwoman, might be the man, whoſe power ſhe had flown, now began too late to reflect on her raſh temerity; yet, as ſhe perſuaded herſelf this was Lord Graham, ſhe in her heart blamed Elfrida, for the repugnancy ſhe avowed to him. Filled, however, with apprehenſion, from the character our heroine had drawn of him, ſhe began to aſcend the flight of ſteps, with a determination of following

the

the path, by which ſhe had directed the ſtranger, to reſcue, if poſſible, (ſhould the youth prove an object, ſo dreaded as Lord Graham) her hapleſs niece from his power.

She had ſcarce taken two ſteps, ere ſhe was met by the ſtranger, bearing in his arms his fainting burthen. "Oh heavens!" cried the Counteſs, in an agony, "you have murdered her! you have killed my beloved Elfrida!" "Elfrida! madam, did you ſay?" exclaimed the youth with aſtoniſhment. "Ah heavens! can it be Elfrida de Clifford, that I have the bliſs of holding to my heart? of reſcuing from oppreſſion?" "It is the ſame, Sir," cried the Counteſs, perplexed and doubting; "but bear her to this couch; and, at leaſt, have the humanity to retire, till ſhe is more recovered. Your preſence, you muſt be convinced, has cauſed her diſorder."

"Ah, no!" cried the enraptured youth, "the ſight of me will not alarm my Elfrida. It

It is not me ſhe flies: my preſence will rejoice her." He placed her on the couch; and ſtill ſupporting her in his arms, as he knelt before her, he with looks of unutterable tranſport, fondly ſtrained her to his boſom.

The paſſionate embraces of the youth recalled the ſcattered ſenſes of Elfrida. She wildly gazed around her; and finding herſelf in the arms of a ſtranger, terror again had nearly deprived her of ſenſe. But a well known beloved voice now re-aſſured her. Ah heavens! can it be Alfred?" Yes, my ſweet, my beloved couſin, it is your Alfred; who will ſacrifice his life, to ſave you from the power of Graham. Revive, then, my Elfrida; and let us haſten from this abhorred abode."

The Counteſs gave a faint ſcream. She ſprang forwards to embrace her ſon; (for he it was) but nature worked too powerfully within her; and Elfrida, ſtarting from the arms of her couſin, ſaved her from falling to the ground.

ground. "Alfred," cried ſhe, "help me to ſupport your mother." "My mother!" exclaimed the aſtoniſhed youth, advancing to her aid. "Yes, the unfortunate Counteſs of Mortagne." "Oh God! can it be poſſible, what you tell me? yet ſurely you would not deceive me." "I do not. Be patient; and I will tell the dreadful myſtery, which has kept you ignorant of ſuch a bleſſing But ſee ſhe recovers." "Holy virgin," cried Alfred, kneeling, to ſuſtain the ſacred burthen, "and do I preſs a mother to this heart?" "It is, it is, my Alfred! my beloved ſon!" cried the tranſported Counteſs, viewing the youth with rapture. "Oh God! I thank thee—I am now content to die." She folded him to her boſom. Tears of filial love—of joy—filled the eyes of Alfred. His voice was choked with the emotions that ſwelled his heart, to find a mother, whoſe memory he had been taught to venerate, even to a degree of adoration, ſtill lived. But to find her a priſoner in a loathſome cell, without even the common comforts of life—to have

known, that, in a ſtate ſo dreadful, ſhe had waſted the prime of her life, bemoaning the cruelties of her fate, and to know her innocence, but yet be conſcious, that a father had inflicted a puniſhment, even inadequate to the worſt of crimes, on her guiltleſs head, was truly bitter to him. He could only murmur out ſome broken ſentences of joy, rapture, tender ſorrow, when gazing, with unutterable ſympathy, on her care-worn countenance, he threw himſelf on her maternal boſom, and gave a looſe to his tears. "Oh my mother!" cried the duteous youth, caſting himſelf at her feet, "Now let me pay that duty, which I have ſo long been cruelly deprived an opportunity of paying you: And here let me ſwear, that no power, but that which robs me of life, ſhall force you from me, till I have delivered you from this deteſted priſon; from the miſeries of a fate, to which by much too long you have been conſigned. Ah! can I remember that thou wert deprived of every bleſſing,—of light,—of liberty,—of friends,—whilſt thy children, unconſcious of thy ſufferings,

ings, were in poſſeſſion of every comfort,—enjoying themſelves for years, whilſt their hapleſs mother was a priſoner? Ah God! entombed alive! with tears, with vain complaints, bewailing her wretched deſtiny! Can I remember this, and not deteſt the cruel hand, that inflicted theſe injuries?"

"Yes, my ſon," interrupted the Counteſs, with an air of mild command, "you muſt forget them all: all except my innocence." "By every ſaint in heaven, I doubt it not," exclaimed young Graham with warmth; whilſt an animating fire darted from his eyes: "and 'tis that which makes me hate the author of thy miſery." The Counteſs's eye glanced reproof on Alfred. He coloured, and looked abaſhed. "Remember, young man," ſaid ſhe gravely, "that Mortagne is your father. Nor can you yet be certain, that I merit not my ſufferings."

Alfred took from his pocket a letter. 'This madam," ſaid he, preſenting it to his mo-

ther, "written in the laſt moments of a guilty life, will clear your character from every ſtain, even in the eye of my father. I took the departing Bertrand's confeſſion, and exhorted him to clear the innocence of an unfortunate being, whom he acknowledged to have wronged; little knowing that it was a mother's honour, I urged him to do juſtice to."

The Counteſs fell on her knees, with gratitude to heaven. "This, indeed," cried ſhe, "is beyond my hopes. Ah! then, is it permitted me, again to enter the world, with a name unblemiſhed? nor my children to feel a doubt of their mother's innocence? But come, my ſon," continued ſhe, riſing; "you tell me, my chief enemy is languiſhing on a bed of ſickneſs. Let me calm the horrors of his guilty ſoul, now verging upon eternity,—by aſſurance of my forgiveneſs."

"This paſſage, deareſt madam," cried Alfred, trembling for her ſafety, leads to inſtant

ſtant freedom; that (pointing to another on the left) to Bertrand's cell; whom, perhaps, you may find ſurrounded by his brethren. Think, O think of the danger you may have to encounter. Lord Graham too, he may be with the father." "Lord Graham!" interrupted Elfrida, ſhrieking at the bare idea. "It matters not, my ſon," cried the Counteſs, with a firm and determined air. "No apprehenſions of future ill ſhall deter me from performing a duty, ſo important, as that of giving eaſe to a ſoul, at the tremendous hour of diſſolution. Yet, this being reſerved alone for me, I commanded you, as a firſt proof of that duty you owe me, to lead Elfrida to a place of ſafety; where I, in a few minutes, ſhall hope to join you." Alfred could not, nor would Elfrida, longer oppoſe a reſolution, ſo great, ſo noble.

They quitted the cell; and the Counteſs, receiving the directions of her ſon, where to find that of Father Bertrand, and having appointed a place to join them again, left her

young companions, offering up their prayers and entreaties to heaven, to ſhield her from the danger, that threatened her.

She found the miſerable wretch, ſtretched on a wooden couch; and abandoned by all his brethren. The hand of death was heavy on him: Cold damps hung upon his brow: His reſpiration was ſhort, and quick. With difficulty he raiſed his languid eyes to the Counteſs, as ſhe entered the cell. He gazed upon her injured form with terrible emotion. His whole frame was convulſed with horror. He raiſed his feeble hands, to ſkreen him from a ſight ſo grievous, as ſhe drew near his bed.

"Bertrand," ſaid ſhe, "be not alarmed. I come not to upbraid, but to give you comfort. The penitence you ſhewed, in ſending me a deliverer, and clearing me, in the eyes of my lord, of a crime you knew me innocent, demanded of me to afford you the comfort of knowing, that by me you are forgiven.

given. To heaven, then, lift up your eyes. It is not yet too late. With pleaſure is the penitence of ſinners accepted." A deep groan of anguiſh iſſued from the troubled ſpirit of the dying man. In vain he tried to ſpeak. His lips were parched, and his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. He looked wiſtfully towards a table, that ſtood in the room: then cloſed his eyes in deſpair. There was a cordial on it; and the Counteſs underſtood his deſire. She poured a ſmall portion down his parched throat, and moiſtened his dry lips. It ſomewhat revived him. "Miniſtering angel of peace and comfort," ſaid he, raiſing his head, and bowing it feebly, "Oh! with what words ſhall I thank thee, for this kindneſs to a wretch, who was the cauſe of all thy miſeries? Yet it comforts my ſhrinking terrified ſoul, that 'tis not too late to ſave thee, I felt contrition for my crimes. Oh! I have lived a life of guilt: Guilt, too monſtrous, to ſhock thy chaſte ears, by a recital. But ſee, Lady, the rewards of a life like mine. Left, abandoned,

at this awful moment,—a moment made terrible by my crimes, by thoſe who not long ſince have trembled at my frown, and felt their doubtful hearts grow gladdened at my returning ſmile. And couldſt thou, who above all hadſt cauſe to hate me,—whoſe bloom, whoſe beauties, I had conſigned to a living grave, now viſit the wretch, who cauſed thy woes; and by thy charitable aſſurances, thy unhoped-for pardon, try to eaſe my guilty ſoul? Oh! may bleſſings innumerable reward thee for it! may thy Lord like me repent! may thy latter days be ſpent in the boſom of thy friends, thy children! and, above all, may the remembrance of the conſolation, thou haſt imparted to a dying ſinner, comfort thy doubting ſpirit, in the hour of diſſolution!—I would more, but my ſtrength fails me. There is a Lady, who is unjuſtly detained within the Caſtle, in the power of Graham: Save her from ruin. I can no more." He groaned with anguiſh. He caſt an agonizing look at the Counteſs; then at the crucifix, and expired.

Lady

Lady Mortagne, much affected, haſtened from a ſcene, too ſhocking for humanity; and, without interruption, reached the appointed ſpot, where her ſon, Elfrida, and Ellen, were waiting, with fearful apprehenſions, her ſafety.

CHAP. IV.

ACCORDING to the directions of the departed Bertrand, Alfred led the way through a ſubterraneous paſſage, which immediately opened into a thick covert of trees.

The ſenſations of ecſtatic delight, that filled the Counteſs, on once again beholding

the beauties of nature,—on once again being allowed to taſte the ſweetneſs of the morning air, unconfined by hideous walls, is not to be deſcribed. She viewed the enchanting proſpect, which unreſtrained preſented itſelf before her, with a delicious kind of rapture. The glorious beauties of the ſun, whoſe refulgent rays burſt through a clear and almoſt tranſparent ſky,—the varied colour of the falling leaf, made humid by an autumnal ſhower,—all were ſubjects, that afforded her, whilſt contemplating, pleaſures the moſt exquiſite. She remembered it was ſummer, when ſhe had been taken from the world; and the ſcene before her announced the departure of that beauteous ſeaſon. The landſcape ſeemed congenial with her feelings.

A ſigh of tender recollection eſcaped, as ſhe caſt her eye back on the receding Caſtle, which contained the duſt of the hapleſs Montcalm. It for a moment fixed her, inſenſible to every thing, but his loved memory,

to

to the ſpot from whence ſhe had viewed it: But the tender entreaties of Alfred reſtored her again to that gratitude, which ſhe felt for regaining her liberty, and at finding herſelf with a beloved ſon. A variety of emotions ſwelled her heart, and convinced her, that happineſs in this world cannot be pure, and unallayed by pain. Yet her heart bent in humble acknowledgment to her Creator, for again permitting her to behold his works. The heath, refreſhed by the ſhower, ſent up with the morning breeze a dewy freſhneſs, that invigorated her ſpirits; and the cheerful and animating carols of the lark infuſed into her heart a peaceful calmneſs, that long had been a ſtranger to the Counteſs.

Having left the Caſtle, and its deteſted Lord, at a conſiderable diſtance, our fugitives began to conſider, what place ſhould afford them refuge, from the terrors that would alarm the guilty ſoul of Mortagne, at the knowledge of the Counteſs's flight, and the diſappointed Graham; being convinced that

no ſpot, however private, would remain unſearched, to regain into their poſſeſſion objects, whoſe injuries were too great, ever to ſuppoſe, that vengeance would not now be launched againſt ſuch guilt, as conſcience would make them feel they had practiſed.

"Ah!" exclaimed Elfrida, in a joyful kind of rapture, after having pauſed for ſometime, in conſidering the dangers that awaited them, without protection, "Ah! that I had the happineſs of being known to Lady Saliſbury! On her could I rely, for mine and your beloved mother's ſafety. Her Lord was the boſom friend of my father: Sure I am, that ſhe would not refuſe an aſylum to the ſiſter, and daughter, of a man, who was dear to him beyond expreſſion." "How fortunate is this recollection, deareſt Elfrida!" returned Alfred delighted. "I have letters for that lady, from the regent; which only my love for you has prevented my delivering. Her ſeat, however, lies at a conſiderable diſtance from the Caſtle. Could you, do you think,

deareſt

deareſt madam," continued he, turning his eyes, with tender anxiety, towards his mother, "could you bear the fatigues of a journey, of near fifty miles?"

"Think not of me, my ſon," returned the Counteſs. "Supported by my Alfred, and the thoughts of ſeeing my Matilda, though paſt the ſummer of my days, I yet feel my courage ſuperior to all danger, but the thought of ſeeing thy father; who, though convinced of my innocence, will never let me be a living witneſs of his crimes, againſt Montcalm and me."

At this moment, the ſound of horſes hooſs alarmed them. Elfrida was near ſinking to the earth with terror, on perceiving a man, at full ſpeed, in purſuit of them. He had a led horſe, faſtened by a long bridle to his own; and having now made up to them, Elfrida and Ellen immediately recognized the features of one of their raviſhers.

The reſpectful air, with which he accoſted Elfrida, aſtoniſhed the Counteſs, and her ſon; but re-aſſured the doubting heart of our heroine, who immediately recalled to her remembrance, the promiſe, ſhe had gained from her conductor, of attempting her deliverance; and ſhe, with grateful thanks, accepted his offers of ſervice, and protection, till ſhe ſhould reach ſome place of ſafety.

The man informed her, that he had procured an additional horſe, for her or her attendant; and added, that he was on his way towards the Caſtle, in the hope of effectuating her deliverance, when he was ſurpriſed by the ſight of her, and Ellen, (whoſe perſon he could not miſtake) reſtored to liberty, and in company with thoſe, who, he knew, were not inhabitants of the Caſtle.

He added, that having a relation at no great diſtance, from whom he had procured the horſe for Elfrida, if the lady and gentleman who were with her, would accompany him

him to their houſe, he ſhould have it in his power to procure the like accommodation for them; as their appearance, he obſerved, did not ſpeak, as if they were uſed to travelling on foot.

To this propoſal the party joyfully acceded; and the Counteſs and Elfrida being mounted on the two horſes, they ſoon reached the cottage, deſcribed by their guide. Having taken ſome neceſſary refreſhment, and liberally rewarded their kind friend, who had, according to his promiſe, procured them an additional horſe, Alfred, having placed his mother behind him, and fixed Elfrida, and her attendant, on theirs, they proceeded on their journey, after receiving the directions of the friendly guide, for the ſafeſt and moſt unfrequented path, that would lead them to the manſion of Lady Saliſbury.

As they journeyed, Elfrida, whoſe thoughts ſeldom long wandered from the injured Edgar, willing to lead to a ſubject, ſo intereſting

to

to her heart, inquired of Alfred, by what methods he had eſcaped captivity, and to what fortuitous circumſtance they owed their deliverance to him. Alfred having anſwered her firſt queſtion, by informing her, that, on an exchange of priſoners being made, he had procured his freedom, our heroine, too anxious to wait for a reply to her latter inquiry, ventured, with a trembling and hurried manner, to even aſk if De Montford was among the priſoners, that had been liberated. "He was not," was the reply of young Graham. Elfrida trembled, and turned pale. "Perhaps, he lives not," exclaimed ſhe, gaſping for breath. "De Montford ſtill lives, my couſin," returned Alfred, ſtifling the concern he felt, at ſeeing her extreme emotion,—the jealous envy, that was faſt riſing within his boſom: "Though in vain, after I was reſtord to liberty, did I make inquiries concerning that happy youth. And fruitleſs, alſo, was the ſearch I made for him, on the ſuppoſition, that he had ſhared the fate of many of our brave countrymen, and fallen in

that.

that engagement, ſo fatal to our cauſe. Believe me, Elfrida," proceeded he, "my heart was not ſo narrowed,—ſo loſt to generous emotions, but that I felt pleaſed at my not meeting with the object, I was in ſearch of: And I retired from the dreadful view of ſlaughtered friends, with the pleaſing hope, Sir Edgar had eſcaped the general carnage. Haſtening from a land, that had proved ſo deſtructive to my countrymen,—I once more reached my native ſhores,—exulting in the hope, that Elfrida's ſentiments being changed, in regard to the man, whom ſhe had once favoured with her eſteem,—ſhe would no longer be inſenſible to the paſſion of one, that adored her."

The youth pauſed, and looked expreſſively at our heroine; who but too well underſtood his meaning. She bluſhed, and grew uneaſy: whilſt the Counteſs, anxious for her ſon, whoſe love was too obvious, to eſcape the ſlighteſt obſervation, tried to read, in the countenance of Elfrida, her ſentiments, but

ſhe,

ſhe, with an averted face, endeavoured to eſcape her penetrating glances, Alfred continued, "Shall I own to you, I feared, leſt Stafford had improved upon your juſt reſentment of De Montford's perfidy? I could not have borne it from him; dear as he was to me. He knew how much I loved you. Nay, turn not from me, Elfrida: I aſk not for a return. Full well do I know, how much I injured Sir Edgar, when I ſuppoſed him falſe to his vows to you, and regardleſs of his honour. But when I believed him an apoſtate to both, when I was convinced, that, ſhould he yet live, virtue, honour, all would oppoſe Elfrida's uniting with one, who had ſhewn ſuch a diſregard to either, let her not wonder that the man, who ſhe had avowed, ſtood next in her eſteem, to him, ſhe once did, but could not now, love, would not eaſily forego the ſweet, the exalted hope, to any human being, of calling her his. Forgive my warmth, my couſin; but never will Alfred ſee you united to any, ſave De Mountford.

"My

"My father received me," purſued the youth, "with a mixture of confuſion, and conſtrained pleaſure. I felt I was not a welcome viſitant: and my joy was damped, even before I heard the afflicting intelligence, that you were not at Graham-hall. But I felt ſomewhat conſoled, when I learnt that Stafford was married: and that the happineſs of my beloved ſiſter was ſecured. Although I greatly wondered, I had no reaſon to doubt the truth of your having accompanied her; as the viſit was probable, on ſuch an occaſion. But yet my father's ſuffering you to leave him, filled me with aſtoniſhment, and perplexity.

"I inquired for Lord Graham. He alſo was of the party. Happy being, thought I! and I retired penſive, and uneaſy, to my chamber. I tried to get at the ſpeech of the faithful Agnes, without the preſence of any one, to interrupt my converſing with her, on a ſubject next my heart; but I found I was regarded with ſuſpicion: and my father contrived

trived to keep me in his preſence, during the day.

" As I was retiring to bed, my boſom filled with a variety of diſtracting fears. My old domeſtic, Robert, who had attended me with fidelity, from my infancy, and by his actions had ſecured my eſteem, and confidence, ſeeing me in a muſing and melancholy poſture, reſting on one arm my head, thus accoſted me. 'I fear, my dear young maſter, (ſaid the old man, whilſt the muſcles of his affectionate face ſtrongly worked) that you are not well: that my lord and you are not the friends you ſhould be.' 'Neither, my honeſt friend,' ſaid I, taking his hand, 'is the caſe; but I thank you for the ſolicitude you expreſs for me.' 'Ah! my dear Sir, I am grieved to ſee you ſo mournful, on your return, after having ſeen ſo much trouble in a foreign land. But I fear, indeed, all is not ſo well, in regard to the ſweet young lady, your couſin.' 'What of her?' cried I, eagerly ſtarting from my ſeat. 'What

is

is it you know of Lady Elfrida? Is ſhe not then, with my ſiſter, Lady Stafford?' 'Ah Lord forgive thoſe who tried to deceive your honour. The Lady Elfrida left Graham-hall, ſome months after my lady, your ſiſter; and, to my thinking, in a very ſtrange manner, as only Ellen accompanied her. But my Lord ſeemed ſatisfied, and gave out, that ſhe was on a viſit to his daughter; who had promiſed to meet her, at no great diſtance from the hall. To all of us this appeared but a lame ſtory; that a lady of her rank, and fortunes, ſhould travel without attendants: But we were commanded, on pain of loſing our places, to give credit to it. However, Mr. Gifford, my lord's under butler, informed me, with a wink, that this tale was fabricated to deceive us; for he had overheard a converſation, between my Lord and his ſon, which gave him reaſon to believe, Lady Elfrida was at Mortagne-Caſtle: and, to his certain knowledge, the young Lord was there; as he had, by my Lord's command, ſent ſome papers to him,

him, by his brother Hubert.' I ſtood agaſt at this intelligence. He proceeded.

'The poor young lady, after the departure of Lady Matilda, took on greatly. My heart has often bled for her, when my Lord was unkind: And to be ſure he was very hard upon her, and ſeldom ſpoke but in anger. And when the news came of the overthrow of the Britiſh army, ſhe wept, and looked ſo piteous, it quite vexed me, that my Lord, your father, could have the heart to upbraid her, as he did, about grieving for a beggar; for ſo he called a young man, whom Ellen told me ſhe loved, and whom her father had brought up from a child: and a ſweet brave gentleman, they ſay, he is. Well, ſhe told me, alſo, that my Lord's family being determined on a match taking place between Lord Graham and her Lady, had endeavoured to ſet her againſt the young gentleman, by circulating ſtories of his falſehood, and great wickedneſs: but, ſome how or other, her Lady had come to the truth of the matter,

matter, and knew them to be falſe; and had refuſed Lord Graham, which had incenſed my Lord againſt her. But I am much afraid (continued the old man, wiping his eyes) the poor lady will be forced to conſent at laſt. And to be ſure it is a pity; as Ellen told me, ſhe has often declared, ſhe would rather die, than wed him.'

" Thunderſtruck, and filled with the moſt direful apprehenſions, at what I had heard, I ordered Robert, with all ſecrecy to ſaddle my horſe; vowing, if poſſible, to ſave you from a fate ſo deteſted.

" The faithful creature would have accompanied me; but I inſiſted on his remaining where he was. And, notwithſtanding the darkneſs of the night, I ſoon had left the Hall many miles behind me.

" During my journey, I took from my pocket a letter, that Robert had given me, immediately before I left the Hall. It was from Stafford;

Stafford; and the contents, though they deeply criminated himſelf, wholly exculpated de Montford's conduct, in the affair, in which he appeared in ſo baſe a light. The account did honour to the feelings, and ſpirit of Sir Edgar: and I took ſhame to myſelf, for the part I had acted, in prejudicing you againſt a youth, whoſe every action was replete with honour; and I determined to make every reparation, within my power, for the injuries I had done him.

"Towards the evening of the ſecond day, I found myſelf within a league of the Caſtle; and, alighting from my horſe, I left him at a cottage. As I drew near its magnificent ruins, I re-covered myſelf with a large horſeman's coat, which I procured from Robert, in order to diſguiſe myſelf, as much as poſſible.

"Being nearly duſk, I determined to hover about the courts of the Caſtle, in the hope of gaining ſome intelligence concerning you. As I was viewing the ſituation of the ancient

ancient monaſtery, which adjoined the walls, and reflecting on the practicability of aſſiſting you, ſhould my ſearch prove ſucceſsful, I found myſelf near the gate of the chapel; when a friar, of a moſt unpromiſing viſage, appeared, and ſeemed to regard me with attention. The ſight of him inſpired me with horror. I fancied he looked capable of committing, without remorſe, the moſt atrocious crimes: That, perhaps, in ſpite of your tears, prayers, and entreaties, he might have united you to Graham. I ſtopped involuntarily, to ſurvey his bloated figure; and he advanced. At that moment, a fragment of earth caught his foot, and he fell. His head pitched againſt a large ſtone figure, which lay mouldering into atoms: And I raiſed him, almoſt ſenſeleſs, from the ground. His extreme corpulency had proved fatal to him. He had powers ſufficient to point towards his cell; and I, with difficulty, ſupported him to it, before he fainted.

" It was not in my nature to abandon a fellow creature, in the ſtate, the poor wretch before me was in; however I might feel chagrined at the idea of the delays, and difficulties in which my humanity might involve me. And to my great good fortune, as I thought, I met with one of the brotherhood, to whom I related the misfortune, that had befallen his ſuperior; for ſuch I learnt he was. The monk heard me, with a ſatisfaction he could not diſguiſe; but, nevertheleſs, gave me a cordial to recover him; and accompanied me to his cell. But when he ſaw his fallen brother, to all appearance dead; that no more was to be dreaded the once terrific form, which lay ſtrethed out before him; 'Such be, (cried he, with an air of exultation) the fate of all bad men. And heaven has, at length, thought fit to puniſh this moſt abandoned of its creatures.'

'Forbear,' cried I with indignation, 'to burden thoſe with reflections, whom the Almighty chaſtens. Is this the charity you preach?'

preach?' The father coloured, nor deigned an anſwer; and believing, or ſeeming to believe, that nothing could reſtore his dying brother, quietly withdrew, leaving to the cares of an entire ſtranger, the unfortunate abbot.

" In the courſe of a little time, the cordial, I had forced down his throat, began to evince its invigorating qualities; and Bertrand (for ſo was he called) began to revive, and to become ſenſible of my care. Caſting around his eyes, with a look of indignant ſorrow, at ſeeing himſelf abandoned by all but me, he ſighed deeply. He attempted, in a voice broken and weak, from his extreme ſuffering, to thank me for the kindneſs I had ſhewn him. 'I feel,' cried he, 'my ſon, a few ſhort moments will terminate my exiſtence here. Alas! my crimes render the thought of death terrible.' The unhappy wretch now groaned with agony and remorſe.

" I ſeized the moment of his contrition, to point out the neceſſity of making all the atonement in his power, while life remained, before he could hope for pardon from his offended Maker. He ſtarted, and looked at me with attention. ' I have been informed, father," cried I, ' that within the walls of that Caſtle (pointing at the ſame time to it) there is an unfortunate female confined; to whom, perhaps, it is in your power to give freedom. Soon, perhaps, without your aid, ſhe will be reſcued from the power of that unjuſt Lord, who detains her: But will not the reflection, that you have been the cauſe of her eſcaping, from the cruelties ſhe labours under, torn from her friends, and kept a wretched priſoner, by the man her ſoul abhors, calm the horrors, that your guilty ſoul will feel, when all its great offences will be ſummed up?' My words appalled him. The bed ſhook with his emotion. ' Is it poſſible, then, the Earl can have divulged the ſecret?' cried he, with manifeſt conſterna-

tion.

tion. Yet it matters not: My ſoul ſhall clear itſelf of this its greateſt guilt. Reach me thoſe keys, my ſon. Yet, before you give liberty to the moſt amiable, and virtuous of her ſex, I muſt write a few lines, to vindicate her fame from the foul blot I have given it.' Indignation, for a moment, baniſhed the joy I felt, at the proſpect of my Elfrida's deliverance, at the baſeneſs of that heart, which could ſully the purity of ſo much innocence; and my countenance denoted my inward rage. His looks ſeemed to entreat my pity. The tenſe, the hollow eye, that turned upon me, at my altered viſage, diſarmed my reſentment; and I ſtill could bear, in pity to his ſufferings, the company of the man, my ſoul abhorred.

" He wrote, till his ſtrength was exhauſted. ' There, my ſon, deliver this to Mortagne. Tell him, my laſt breath proclaimed her innocence. Here are the keys, that will give freedom to the unfortunate lady. Lift up that trap door, and turn to the left;

where a long narrow paſſage will immediately front you. That will lead you to her priſon.' He gave me farther directions, what path to purſue, that would take us from the Caſtle, without obſervation. Though there was an ambiguity in his words, I had not time to notice them. Having, therefore, adminiſtered every aſſiſtance to the ſuffering penitent, I left him, accompanied by his bleſſings; and, with a heart beating with expectation, I prepared to give liberty to one, whoſe happineſs was ſo dear to me.

"Shall I confeſs, deareſt madam,' continued Alfred, turning towards his mother, and bluſhing, 'that, for a moment, I ſuffered the deepeſt diſappointment to take poſſeſſion of my ſoul, at finding, inſtead of Elfrida, a ſtranger? But ah! when, on a nearer view, I ſaw a form, and features, intereſting to my heart;—when I ſaw features, that, though faded by care, yet ſtill retained a reſemblance to thoſe, ſo venerated by me;—when conſcious

ſcious of your innocence, your misfortunes;—I forgot all, but a wiſh to ſave you."

The Counteſs caſt a look of benign love at her ſon, and half reproached Elfrida, by her eyes, for not being more ſenſible to the love of ſuch a heart as Alfred's. Our heroine underſtood it, and was grieved. A long explanation, ſhe knew, was neceſſary, before ſhe could clear herſelf of inſenſibility in the eyes of her aunt.

CHAP. V.

THE rage of Lord Graham, when in the morning he found Elfrida had eſcaped his power, is eaſily to be conceived.

It was ungovernable. He curſed, and ſwore, at the innocent domeſtics, without ſetting any bounds to his fury; and charged them all with having betrayed him, and aided her eſcape; vowing, that ſhould they not recover her, in the courſe of the day, their lives ſhould pay the forfeit of their neglect. As reaſon and reflection returned, his thoughts fixed upon Bertrand, who had not appeared in the general confuſion that reigned, as having been the inſtrument of procuring her freedom.

Fired by the thought, he viſited the monaſtery, and ſought the cell of the father. He found him extended upon his miſerable couch; pale, cold, and motionleſs: Death having, for many hours before his arrival, ſecured its victim from mortal power.

Lord Graham turned, with horror, from the ſcene before him; and haſtily retreated to the Caſtle: Where he learnt, from one of the fathers, that a young ſtranger had attended the

the laſt moments of the wretched Bertrand. At this information the countenance of Graham became pale, and agitated. 'Search out for this young man,' cried he, in a hurried manner, 'and bring him to me.'

The youth was not to be found. 'Slaves! miſcreants,' cried Graham, almoſt choked with rage and diſappointment; 'Ye are all leagued againſt my peace. Hence! avaunt! and, as you value your lives, your fortunes, let him be brought to my preſence.'

The domeſtics retired, confounded at this new charge, and wondering that their Lord ſhould expreſs ſo much concern for a ſtranger, at a time when under the dominion of diſappointed love. They prepared, however, for this new command; and ſought, without ſucceſs, every avenue, or path, that led to the Caſtle, for the youth, whoſe departure had cauſed ſuch commotion, in the breaſt of their Lord.

A new concern now engroſſed the ſoul of Graham. Abſorbed in the contemplation of images the moſt terrific, Elfrida was forgotten.

At length rouſed from the gloomy reverie, which preſages the moſt fatal had plunged him into, by the return of his domeſtics, with an account of the ill ſucceſs of their reſearches, his mind again became a prey to all the tranſports of ungovernable rage. One hope alone ſuſtained him, amid theſe repeated diſappointments, that Bertrand might have carried the important ſecret with him to the grave. The thought revived him; and he impatiently waited till night ſhould give him an opportunity of ſatisfying his fears.

Acquainted with the ſecret of the ſubterraneous paſſage, which led to the oriel, no ſooner had the clock ſtruck eleven, and the inhabitants of the Caſtle retired to their reſpective apartments, than Lord Graham, taking a lamp, proceeded with cautious ſteps

to

to the cell of Bertrand. Alarmed at not finding the keys, which opened the vaulted apartment, his heart ſickened with apprehenſion. But, though diſappointed in his ſearch, he determined forcibly to make his way through the door of the cloiſter, and at once clear his doubts.

Having provided himſelf with proper tools, to effectuate his purpoſe, he lifted up the trap door of the cell, and deſcended the ſtone ſteps, which led to the paſſage. In turning haſtily, as he wound round the pillar which ſupported the ſteps, his lamp blew out. A curſe of imprecation eſcaped the lips of Graham. The dreadful purpoſes, which caution had whiſpered him to execute, and only a ſpark of lingering feeling, that ſtill lurked in his heart, had made him irreſolute of perpetrating, now that his paſſions were inflamed, by diſappointment and vexation, ruſhed upon his imagination, with redoubled force; and he unſheathed his dagger. The great clock of the Caſtle now ſtruck twelve. The moon

threw a chequered gleam along his path, ſufficient for him to purſue his way. With difficulty, however, he groped his paſſage, through the irregular windings, which continually impeded his ſearch. At length he ſeemed to have gained the end. He ſtopped a moment to reflect; but the dewy chillneſs of the air made him proceed. His breath was quick: His pulſe beat an irregular and hurried motion. His hand trembled: Twice he dropt his dagger, and twice did conſcience prompt him to leave it on the ground. But the momentary impulſe was repelled by fear; and again he graſped the direful weapon, with a firmer hold; and curſed the weakneſs, which had made him loſe it.

A violent clap of thunder now burſt over his head: It ſtruck to the heart of Graham. A ſecret awe, hitherto unknown to him, forced its way to his breaſt; and again he pauſed: But again proceeded.

Lord

Lord Graham now found himſelf at the door of the oriel It was cloſed; but the key was in the lock. Hope re-animated his breaſt. He put his hand to the key, and without much difficulty turned it. But, though the lock gave way, to his infinite ſurpriſe, the door was withheld from opening, by a force from within, ſuperior to his own; and, for ſome time, reſiſted every effort of his to force it. Made deſperate, by a continued ſeries of diſappointments, and the black reſolve, which filled his ſoul, inſpiring him with additional ſtrength and courage, he, with a force only deſperation could have lent him, wrenched it open; and ruſhed forward, with a determination of perpetrating his murderous intent: when a hollow groan, that ſeemed to proceed from beneath, arreſted his ſteps; and, for a moment, ſuſpended his purpoſe. He ſtood liſtening, in an attitude of fearful expectation, to hear if the ſound was repeated. All was ſtill, and ſilent; and Graham advanced. A ray of the moon ſettled in one corner of the cloiſter, and ſhewed him the homely

homely couch, which, for many years, had ſerved the hapleſs Counteſs, to reſt her liſtleſs frame on. His arm was uplifted; and already had he reached the ſpot, to ſtrike the fatal blow. When now, a faint light illumined the oriel; and deep and direful groans iſſued from below. Graham became pale and motionleſs, with fear. He remembered his father's crimes: That here lay the murdered, and perhaps innocent Montcalm. A cold and damp chill bedewed his temples. His heart died with fear. In vain he attempted to ejaculate a prayer for mercy. The dagger dropt from his hand. The floor of the vault now ſhook tremendouſly; and Graham felt the ſpot, on which he ſtood, forcibly puſhed upwards. He retreated to the door; but that now was cloſed with violence. He leaned againſt it, to ſave himſelf from falling to the ground; and, with eyes that ſeemed ready to burſt their ſockets, he gazed; whilſt the floor opened, and ſhewed to his terrified ſight a coffin with the lid thrown aſide. Immediately ſprung forth the figure of a youth,

of

of a pale and ſallow viſage. His countenance, though beauteous as the day, was ſtern and terrific; and his demeanour majeſtic and commanding. He viewed Lord Graham, with a frowning aſpect. The young Lord drew his ſword. His countenance now became menacing. "Deteſted offspring!" cried the viſion, of an inhuman ſire, thy wicked purpoſes are defeated. The hapleſs object of thy coward vengeance no longer inhabits theſe walls; but is free, and beyond the reach of her oppreſſors. Fly! be gone from this vault; which thy preſence contaminates: And ere too late repent the bloody purpoſe, that conducted thee hither."

Graham waited not for a repetition of the mandate; but quitted, with all the haſte his trembling frame would admit of, a place, whoſe terrors had ſunk deep into his ſoul.

No ſooner had he gained his apartment, than he ſwooned. The domeſtics, alarmed at the noiſe that Graham made in entering,

now haſtened to his chamber: Where they found him, to their infinite ſurpriſe, extended on the floor, and apparently without life. Having by various remedies brought him to himſelf, they were impatient to know the cauſe of his diſorder: But to ſatisfy them in this, was little the inclination of their Lord. He ſlightly evaded their inquiries, by complaining of an indiſpoſition, which had overtaken him ſuddenly. But this, though it ſilenced their queſtions, ſatisfied them not. The evident confuſion of Lord Graham, his agitated frame, which ſtill ſhook with violence,—his fixed and vacant eye,—his tremulous voice, all gave riſe to conjectures, that ſomething extraordinary had happened, to occaſion this diſorder. Nor were they diſpleaſed to receive a mandate, to have every thing in readineſs, for immediately quitting the Caſtle.

The occurrences which had delayed Lord Graham's purſuit of Elfrida, proved highly favourable to the ſafety of our travellers; who had purſued their journey without moleſtation,

leſtation, and were now arrived in ſight of the magnificent edifice of Lady Saliſbury. The ſight renovated the flagging ſpirits of the Counteſs, and her fair kinſwoman: But as for Alfred, had not his heart ſometimes been filled with apprehenſions, for the ſafety of thoſe ſo dear to him, he would have wiſhed for ever the continuance of a journey ſo delightful.

It being ſettled by the whole of the party, that Alfred ſhould announce to the Lady Saliſbury the quality, and peculiar ſituation of her gueſts, and the neceſſity of a profound ſecrecy being preſerved, he diſmounted, and left his fair companions at the gates.

Young Graham found that noble Lady juſt recovering from the ſhock, her mind had ſuſtained, by the death of her beloved Lord. Yet, notwithſtanding the viſible cloud of ſorrow, that veiled her fine face, ſhe received her youthful viſitor, with a grace and eaſe, that inſpired him with confidence and eſteem.

The

The Counteſs of Saliſbury was paſt the bloom of youth; tall, and of a majeſtic preſence. The remains of former beauty were ſtill viſible; and ſorrow, more than age, had diminiſhed the luſtre of her eyes. There was a mild dignity, and complacency in her manners, that inſtantly engaged the heart. As ſhe was ſurrounded by her attendants, Alfred entreated ſhe would grant him the favour of a private audience. Though the lady was ſurpriſed at this requeſt; yet ſhe immediately gave a ſignal with her hand, for her women to withdraw: And he then communicated his name, and rank, with that of his mother and Elfrida; entreating, in their name, the protection their birth and misfortunes merited. Pleaſure and ſurpriſe were equally expreſſed in the countenance of Lade Saliſbury, at this intelligence. "Is it poſſible," exclaimed ſhe, in a kind of tranſport, "that the daughter of De Clifford is within theſe gates? Fly noble Sir, and aſſure her, and your unfortunate mother, that this manſion ſhall be their own, whilſt they chuſe to honour it by their preſence.

ſence. Oh! what do I not owe to your noble family!" Alfred retired, with a mixture of aſtoniſhment and ſatisfaction, at the reception he had met with; and ſoon joined his fair fellow travellers, who were charmed at the account he gave of their amiable protectreſs.

Lady Saliſbury received her gueſts, with a warmth and courteſy, that impreſſed a lively gratitude on their hearts. Having aſſured them of her firm protection, ſhe turned towards Elfrida with great emotion, and taking her hand; "Tell me," cried ſhe, "deareſt young Lady, if that youth, whom your father ſo generouſly protected, ſtill lives. Oh! you know not how much, how greatly intereſted I am for him." There was an affecting earneſtneſs in her manner, that penetrated the ſoul of our heroine; and ſcarcely could ſhe ſufficiently command her feelings, to return any kind of anſwer. "I know not, madam, I hope heaven has preſerved a youth ſo amiable: But long, very long is it, ſince intelligence

genee has been heard of him." Here ſhe grew too agitated to proceed. Lady Saliſbury deeply ſighed. "Mere curioſity," ſaid ſhe, "is not the motive, which led me to the inquiry; although the high eſteem, my beloved lord held that noble youth in, would always make me feel intereſted in his fate, were I not influenced by reaſons the moſt powerful. He is nearly allied to me." The company exhibited marks of ſurpriſe.

"Strange, however, as this may ſeem," purſued the Lady, "it is nevertheleſs true; and his birth is alſo ſuperior to my own. But that circumſtance endears him not to me, ſo much as his being the only ſon of a dear and beloved ſiſter of mine. O that I may live to claſp him to this heart! To weep over all that now exiſts of my Emmeline!" Lady Saliſbury pauſed, and raiſed her eyes, ſwimming in tears, to heaven; nor were her gueſts leſs affected. "To-morrow," continued ſhe, "I will relate the myſterious circumſtances, that connect him to me. To-night (ad-

(addreſſing herſelf to the Counteſs and Elfrida) you both, dear ladies, ſeem too much exhauſted with your fatigues, to bear the recital of a hiſtory, chequered with the moſt painful events."

Our heroine, whoſe curioſity was highly raiſed, would, with pleaſure, have poſtponed her much needed repoſe, to hear a narrative ſo intereſting to her, as that which related to the parents of De Montford. But ſeeing the Counteſs overcome with fatigue, ſhe reſtrained her impatience, and aſſented to Lady Saliſbury's poſtponing it, till the following day.

After ſlightly partaking of ſome refreſhment, and feeling more and more pleaſed with their amiable hoſteſs, our travellers were conducted to the magnificent apartments, prepared for them: Where the Counteſs of Mortagne taſted a repoſe, that had long been denied her. At parting, Lady Saliſbury affectionately embraced Elfrida. "What joy (cried

(cried ſhe) do I feel, deareſt young lady, in any way being ſerviceable to the daughter and relations of one, to whom I owe ſo much! O that the fond preſages which fill my heart, may become realized! That a youth, whoſe virtues are as reſplendent, as his actions are glorious, and who is not indifferent to the heart of her, to whoſe parent he owes the being what he is, O that it may be given me to ſee you united! Elfrida bluſhed, and turned aſide to conceal her emotion. The uncertain fate of him ſhe loved, and when now no obſtacle remained to impede their union, gave her heart a pang, the acuteneſs of which was not to be concealed; and Lady Saliſbury, tenderly ſaluting her lovely gueſt, required not the aſſurance from her lips, to be convinced that her nephew was beloved.

Long did the night appear to our heroine; whoſe anxious thoughts prevented her from taking that reſt, her wearied frame ſo much required. The knowledge of the exalted birth of De Montford only afforded her pleaſure,

ſure, as the world now would have no pretext for blaming her choice: The virtues of his heart ſhe prized, infinitely above aught that wealth or titles could beſtow; and ſhe felt that no human grandeur could more endear him to her.

At laſt the wiſhed for morn appeared; and the party being aſſembled in the hoſpitable parlour of Lady Saliſbury, that lady only waited for the breakfaſt being ended, and the ſervants withdrawn, to begin her promiſed recital.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

HISTORY requires that we now return to the brave Sir Edgar: who, upon recovering from the ſwoon, he had fallen into, found himſelf placed on a homely couch, in an apartment which bore all the appearance of a convent-cell. A lamp, ſuſpended by a ſmall wire, hung in the middle, and ſerved to light the apartment. An old man, in the habit of a recluſe, watched over the almoſt lifeleſs body of the youth; concern and pity blended in his countenance. De Montford had ſcarcely ſtrength ſufficient, to inquire where he was, or to what friendly aid he owed the preſervation of his exiſtence: When

When the venerable old man, charmed at the returning life of his patient, enjoined him ſilence; and preſenting him with a reſtorative, bade him compoſe himſelf. "You are with a Chriſtian, and a brother, (cried he) therefore, be ſatisfied of your ſafety, my ſon."

In the courſe of a few hours, from the friendly cares, and compaſſionate attentions of Father Jerome, (for ſo was he called) Edgar found his ſtrength begin to renovate: And he now could return thoſe thanks, which were ſo much due, for the kind ſervices of his benevolent hoſt. But as his wounds grew leſs painful, his mind reverted back to the misfortunes of the preceding day; and a ſadneſs and deep dejection hung on his ſpirits, at the thoughts of the fate, that had befallen the brave Earl Talbot, and his companions, in battle.

Jerome, who had for ſome hours left his wounded gueſt, on finding he grew better,

now returned; and obſerving him ſufficiently recovered to bear converſation, approached the couch, on which the youth was laid, and thus accoſted him. "To bear the changes and viciſſitudes of this tranſitory life, with reſignation, and a firm reliance on the mercies of our Creator, is the duty of a Chriſtian. I well know, my ſon, the country you are of; and, though fate has delivered you into my power, be aſſured I never will betray that truſt, your miſery has forced you to place in me. I have juſt been told the fortunes of the day, and feel for the misfortunes of a brave ſoldier. As a religious, I forbear to touch on the merits of the cauſe. And if, (continued the good man) my ſervices, or company, can any ways diſſipate that deep dejection, which hangs ſo heavy upon your ſpirits, command me, as far as lies in my power. When dreſt in miſery's garb, whether it be friend or foe, Jerome feels as for a brother."

Our

Our hero, charmed to meet with ſuch generous ſentiments in a Frenchman, ſtrove, in lively terms, to expreſs the gratitude, and eſteem, that filled his boſom, at a conduct ſo exalted; and by every action, as his ſtrength began to gain ground, he tried to convince his preſerver of the deep ſenſe he entertained of the obligation, he had received at his hands. Having now recovered from his wounds, ſufficiently to ſupport the farigues of war, Sir Edgar thought it beneath him to waſte, in inglorious eaſe, that time his country demanded. Yet his heart yearned, with fond impatience, to viſit England: To learn the fatal cauſe, that had eſtranged the affections of Elfrida from her De Montford. Too highly did he eſteem our heroine, to harbour a doubt of abſence having wrought a change ſo painful; and his heart glowed with indignation againſt the author of his misfortune.

Love and honour alternate ſwayed his breaſt: Yet the latter conquered. "I will

deſerve Elfrida," cried the gallant youth, "Though I loſe her. And, honoured as I am by the beſt of princes, were I now to forſake a cauſe, which ſhould animate every Briton's arm with redoubled vigor, I were baſe, unworthy to poſſeſs her. No; periſh the thought. But oh! my Elfrida, (continued he, relapſing into tenderneſs) and muſt I leave thee? leave thee to the arts of an inſidious rival? who will leave no arts untried, to lead thee from the faith, thou haſt ſworn to thy Edgar? Alas! how great the ſacrifice! To my country alone would I make it.

Nobly reſiſting every argument, that was inimical to his duty, De Montford perſevered in his glorious reſolve; and, taking a tender farewell of his benevolent friend, who parted from the youth with tears, and bleſſings, he left the hoſpitable roof, that had ſheltered him, with a promiſe of again viſiting it, on his return to England; and in a few days joined the Regent, who was at Paris. Greatly to his ſatisfaction, he found there, alſo, the brave Earl Talbot; who had procured his free-

freedom, and rejoiced not a little, at again beholding his youthful colleague well, and fighting by his ſide, with his wonted valour. For a length of time the ſucceſs was various, on both ſides; nor till the capture of the warlike Joan, did France give ground.

It was then the humanity of the Engliſh received an indelible ſtain. For the ſoldiers, incited by a thirſt of vengeance, from the ſhame they had undergone, through a female's valour, loudly demanded, that ſhe ſhould be delivered up to juſtice, and tried for ſorcery. The heroic maid, therefore, already condemned in the breaſts of her judges, (it being the only plea that could excuſe their cowardice) was inhumanly tried, and condemned of the crime, alledged againſt her; and ſuffered the cruelties of a death, that the law inflicts on thoſe who are found guilty.

The entire conqueſt of France now lay within the power of England. But with concern, and the moſt ſenſible mortification,

the Regent ſaw his letters to his brother, the Protector, for freſh ſupplies, unheeded; and it required all that admirable courage, and conduct, which Bedford poſſeſſed, to prevent the ſmall powers, that now exiſted in France, from being entirely defeated.

The cruelty and unkindneſs of ſuch proceeding, in a brother whom he fondly loved, preyed upon his heart: A deep melancholy ſeized the prince. But, though this dejection injured and impaired his health, it prevented not his attending to the various duties of his high and important ſtation: and, in ſpite of the trifling aſſiſtance lent him by his brother, he ſuſtained, by his matchleſs prudence, and uncommon valour, a long and glorious war with France, with ſcarce a fifth of their numbers.

At laſt, worn out with fatigue, harraſſed with the inteſtine commotions of England, which in its private quarrels forgot the general good, and inceſſantly appealed to him for

for redreſs, his ſpirit ſank under the complication of diſtreſſing events; and his country loſt the braveſt and wiſeſt of her princes.

York now was appointed regent of France: And ſoon after, Henry marrying Margaret of Anjou, the wars with that country were terminated for ſome time, by an inglorious treaty; and in the lapſe of a few years, of the numberleſs towns, and provinces, conquered by young Henry's warlike ſire, Calais alone remained. Small compenſation for the blood of ſo many heroes, which had been ſhed!

Sir Edgar de Montford, after having diſtinguiſhed himſelf in an eminent manner, in the various engagements that had taken place, now that his ſervices were no longer required, determined to return to his native land. Filled with grief, and indignation, at ſeeing ſo many heroes, whom he loved and revered, for their private as well as public virtues, ſlain in an inefficacious war, and thoſe very lands, which they had preſerved with

their blood, yielded for an unprofitable alliance, he grew diſguſted with a life, he now began to view in impartial colours; and as only to be coveted, when in defence of the ſacred rights of his country. His heart panted for the bleſſings of peace; and for the firſt time he became ſenſible of the cruelty of a war, founded on ambition. Such had been the long and bloody wars with France; the glory of conquering which England had dearly purchaſed, for a few ſhort years, by half its blood and treaſure, which had been laviſhed upon that country. Alas! for what? to gratify ambition, with a tranſient and ſhort-lived applauſe.

Such were the reflections that filled the breaſt of our hero, as he quitted France; nor did the recollection, that he had been the cauſe of rendering fatherleſs a numerous family,—of widowing a doting wife,—of bereaving of its only hope a fond parent,—diminiſh the acuteneſs of his feelings. He ſighed deeply; and vowed to paſs the remainder

mainder of his life, in promoting the good, rather than the glory of his country. Abſorbed in melancholy, he gave the reins to his horſe, and journeyed unmindful of his way. The eve was far advanced, when he diſcovered he had taken a wrong direction; and that he was bewildered in a wild and ſolitary ſcene. The deepening ſhades of thick coming night alarmed him for his ſafety, and prevented his diſtinguiſhing thoſe objects, by which he might retrace the road he had quitted.

The view on his right exhibited mountains, whoſe tremendous height frightened the curious traveller from attaining their ſummit; and only afforded a path, which, from its dangerous appearance, ſeemed to lead to deſtruction. To his left appeared a foreſt, filled with tall pines; its path impervious, and its extent, therefore, uncertain: Yet did Sir Edgar prefer this to encountering the dangers on the right; and giving the ſpur to his faithful ſteed, he continued the

track which led immediately to it. The thick foliage of the trees threw a gloom around, which was every moment deepened by the retreating ſhades of fading light. The path was uninterrupted; and Sir Edgar purſued his way without moleſtation, till the night veiling the heavens with her ſable mantle, no longer was it poſſible for him to proceed. Heartily vexed at the diſagreeable and dangerous ſituation, his inattention had brought him into, he alighted from his horſe; and, having tied him to a tree, he threw himſelf upon the ground, determining there to wait the return of day.

Total darkneſs now obſcured the landſcape; and a ſweet forgetfulneſs ſtole o'er the ſenſes of De Montford. Yet the illuſions of ſleep preſented themſelves, in various forms; and gave a kind of happy termination to his waking thoughts.

The form that had once awed, and aſtoniſhed him, now appeared; but without exciting thoſe

thoſe fears, and terrible emotions, it before had cauſed in him. It called him by the endearing name of ſon; extolled his valour, and admired his virtues: And, as it left him, declared the time drew near, that ſhould diſcloſe his real birth. His Elfrida, then, preſented herſelf to his charmed imagination, beautiful and conſtant as ever. She extended her arms to receive him; and he approached, with tranſport, to claſp her to his heart; when an armed hand plunged a dagger in his breaſt, and he fell at the inſtant he found his happineſs. The agony of the moment baniſhed ſleep from the eyes of Sir Edgar; and he ſtarted from his ſlumbers, while yet the horrors of the viſion were freſh on his memory.

The morn was calm and bright, and the heavens exhibited a clear and ſerene ſky, that diſſipated the unpleaſantneſs of his dreams; and mounting his horſe, they faded, as the varying beauties of the ſurrounding ſcenery called his heart to the contemplation of their

ſublime Creator. Recalling to his memory the promiſe he had made the hoſpitable Jerome, of viſiting his friendly hut, before he abandoned a country, which now inſpired him with horror, he took the directions of ſome wandering peaſants, and purſued his journey to the benevolent recluſe.

In paſſing through a field deſpoiled of its wonted verdure, by the iron hand of war, his attention was called to an aged female, whoſe ſlow and uneven ſteps ſhewed her oppreſſed with age, and pain. De Montford ſlackened his pace, and, riding gently up to her, inquired if he could aſſiſt her, in the journey ſhe ſeemed undertaking. The ſtranger looked obliged; and, thanking him for his humanity, declared her inability to proceed any farther. "I have, (ſaid ſhe) travelled from very near this ſpot, you now find me in, to my native country; and am returning to finiſh the remainder of my days, at the convent of ———, not many miles diſtant from theſe parts: But age and diſappointment has arreſted

reſted my ſteps; and ſcarcely can I drag on my wearied limbs. This night I had hoped to have reached ſome cottages, which lie ſcattered hereabouts: But, alas! I feel the impoſſibility of the attempt.

"Suffer me," cried Sir Edgar, alighting from his horſe, "to aſſiſt you. A few miles from this place dwells a hermit, to whoſe foſtering care I owe my preſent exiſtence. He will receive you, till your ſtrength is ſufficiently recovered, to purſue your journey." The ſtranger could not refuſe this charitable offer. She was, indeed, incapable of proceeding without ſupport; and De Montford, taking the reins of his horſe in one hand, ſlowly aſſiſted his wearied companion, till they reached the cave of the friendly Jerome. Nothing could exceed the joy of the venerable old man, at once more viewing his young friend. He preſſed him to his boſom, with paternal affection. The youth now preſenting the object, his humanity had conducted to the cell, and acquainting the good father

ther with her diſtreſs, the benevolent Jerome inſtantly welcomed her to his hermitage; and, preſenting her with ſome refreſhment, led her to the couch; inſiſting on her repoſing herſelf, till her ſtrength returned.

In the mean time, De Montford having partaken of the ſimple repaſt, preſented him by his venerable friend, now related the various ſcenes that had paſſed, ſince he had quitted his hoſpitable roof.

As the good man was going to comment on the youth's adventures, his care-worn gueſt, finding herſelf recovered from that extreme wearineſs, which oppreſſed her, by a refreſhing ſlumber, now aroſe, and thanked her kind friends for their charitable attentions; and would have departed: But the good Jerome, uniting his perſuaſions to thoſe of his young friend, prevailed on her to ſpend the night at the cave. She, therefore, reſeated herſelf, and joined in the converſation.

There

There was a ſomething in the manner of the aged female, that intereſted Sir Edgar. He could not help feeling anxious to know, what could induce a woman of her years, to quit her native country, and finiſh the few remaining ones, ſhe had to live, in France. "Think me not impertinently curious, madam, (ſaid he) if I confeſs a wiſh of knowing, what circumſtances could lead a female of your age, ſo far from a country which you acknowledge is your home. Could that love of our native ſhores,—a love which, I confeſs, is ſtrongly interwoven with our nature,—ſo far have prevailed on you, as to make you quit the comforts of your home? Comforts, which your age and ſex require,—to encounter dangers and fatigues your frame ſeems little able to combat with?" The ſtranger ſighed; and, fixing her eyes to the ground, remained ſometime abſorbed in thought.

Our hero, who felt that his inquiries were not to be juſtified by his heart, and vexed with himſelf, for wantonly having recalled, perhaps,

haps, painful reflection, to the mind of the ſtranger, apologized for his curioſity, and begged ſhe would forget his having made any demand on her, that by anſwering would cauſe a momentary pain.

A bluſh of gratitude diſpelled the livid paleneſs of the ſtranger's cheek. "Yes, it is fit, noble Sir, (cried ſhe) that, in return for your kindneſs to an unfortunate woman, your curioſity ſhould be gratified: And the relation, I muſt give you, I feel, juſtice demands from me. It was not the love of my country, which led me to viſit it, at my advanced age. Alas! at my years that enthuſiaſm dies; and we feel more attached to that country, which affords us thoſe comforts which declining age requires. It was the command of a dying penitent, that led me to it. Before this, perhaps, ſhe is no more: Yet I feel I have performed my duty. In relating to you the ſhort events of a life, tainted with a hideous crime, let your wonted charity be not forgotten; and be pleaſed

to

to remember, that to expiate it, I undertook a journey, which only a wiſh of making all the reparation, ſtill within my power, to the innocent ſufferer, from my injuſtice, could have induced me to encounter; ſinking as I am to the grave, with years and ſickneſs. Bitterly, bitterly have I bewailed my guilt; yet will the painful remembrance of it not be waſhed from this heart, 'till thoſe who ſuffer from it, be raiſed to that rank, my injuſtice has deprived them of.

My birth was decent: But my father having a large family to ſupport, I was early in life married to a wealthy yeoman. Misfortunes, however, ſoon after our marriage, falling heavy upon us, my huſband took them ſo much to heart, that he fell ſick, and I, in a ſhort time, had the additional grief of loſing him. The ſcanty portion that was bequeathed me, with frugality and attention, ſupported me above want; and I retired with it, into a ſmall village in Warwickſhire. One evening, as I was ſitting at the door of my cottage,

tage, after the fatigues of the day were paſt, a man, whoſe face ſeemed familiar to me, rode up to where I was ſeated; and alighting carefully from his horſe, from which he took a young infant, ſeemingly not more than a month old, and advancing to me, with the child in his arms; 'Tell me (cried he) if I meet not in you, the daughter of Anthony and Mary Williams, and the widow of Arnauld Freakes.' With ſurpriſe I confeſſed I was the ſame. To be ſhort, I found he was my eldeſt brother Stephen.

"He acquainted me with many circumſtances, relating to my family, which would be immaterial to relate; and farther informed me, that he had ſpent his youth in the ſervice of the Earl of Hertford. 'And whoſe is this lovely babe, Stephen?' cried I, taking it into my arms. 'Come into the houſe (replied he, nodding ſignificantly) and I will tell you a ſtrange ſtory, relating to this youngſter. Having entered my cottage, and ſeated ourſelves, 'This child (ſaid he) may be the making

making of us, if care is taken of it. His mother is daughter to the Earl, my maſter.' 'Is it poſſible,' cried I, aſtoniſhed, 'that his friends could then deſert him?' 'If you will ſwear ſecrecy to what I am going to relate, I will tell you the whole of the buſineſs.' To this precaution I conſented, and took an oath of ſecrecy. 'Well then,' ſaid Stephen lowering his voice, 'you muſt know, Alice, there are ſome ſuſpicions about young maſter's being lawfully begotten. But that is none of our buſineſs: and my lord has given me a handſome ſum of money, to take and keep it as my own. And, knowing you lived in theſe parts, I thought you would not diſlike the charge of the poor babe, with a good round purſe to keep it; and that we both could manage better, by joining our ſmall matters, than ſeparate. What ſay you?' I joyfully agreed to the propoſal, as I already had conceived an affection for the ſweet infant; who had now reſted his little head on my boſom, and fallen into a ſound ſleep. 'But how (ſaid I) could the mother of the child

child conſent to part with him?' Stephen ſhook his head, and looked very ſorrowful. 'Ah! poor lady, it almoſt broke her heart, the parting from it. To be ſure, a more beautiful, or ſweeter young creature lives not, than its mother. Alack! it grieved me to the very ſoul, to tear it from her. But my lord was very wroth, and would not liſten to her entreaties, to ſave her child. To be ſure he had ſome reaſon to be angry, as he had promiſed her to the Earl of Saliſbury: But, you may be certain, this affair ſpoiled the match.' 'Poor young lady,' ſaid I, 'how I pity her! She has formed ſome attachment beneath her, and fears to acknowledge it.' 'Why, as to that matter, I have my doubts; for Adeline her governeſs, before I ſet out on my journey, contrived to take me aſide; and, giving me her purſe, 'Here, Stephen,' ſaid ſhe, 'take this; and remember, never let the child of your young lady want for any thing. One of theſe days, you will be rewarded, according to the care you beſtow upon it. Neither dare to doubt the Lady Emmi-

Emmeline's honour. This babe (pointing to the infant) was born in holy wedlock; and ſoon will be acknowledged as ſuch. Therefore, be attentive to it, as you value your good.' 'You may be ſure, I promiſed faithfully to be as careful of it, as was in my power; and deſired her to pacify my young Lady, by telling her my words; and moreover, that I had a ſiſter who was a widow, and would take as much care of it, as of her own. The good governeſs, at this, ſeemed very well pleaſed; and I ſoon after departed with the child.'

This account of Stephen's intereſted me very much, in favor of the ſweet unhappy babe; and I acted the part of a mother by it. In truth, in a very ſhort time I loved it, as if it were my own; and the uncommon lovelineſs of the little Henry (for ſo was he called) occaſioned me to feel a parent's pride; as my neighbour's would, when aſſiſting me to nurſe him, run on in praiſe of his beauty. Scarcely a month had elapſed, when, by a fall

fall from his horſe, I had the misfortune to loſe my brother. As I had kept up a correſpondence with my family, and had of courſe, written to them on this occaſion, acquainting them, alſo, with the charge that now entirely devolved upon me, by the death of Stephen; I was not much ſurpriſed, at ſoon after receiving a viſit from my eldeſt ſiſter, who had for ſome time lived in the ſervice of a lady, who was privately, it was ſaid, married to a great knight; but, for family reaſons, the marriage was kept ſecret. Well, after the firſt expreſſions of joy, at meeting, were over, my ſiſter informed me, that her lady, who was now in the village, hearing that a child, whoſe parents had abandoned it, was now in my care,—had deſired her to make me the offer of taking it off my hands; and to aſſure me, at the ſame time, that the child ſhould be brought up as her own. She told me, that her lady and the knight had diſagreed; but that ſhe had formed the hopes of bringing about a reconciliation, by means of the little Henry; whom ſhe could, as he

was

was abroad, eaſily paſs upon him as his own ſon; having for ſome time declared herſelf pregnant.

The attention of our hero now became redoubled; and his whole frame was convulſed with impatience. "My conſcience,' continued the ſtranger, not perceiving the exceſſive emotion of her younger auditor, 'and the love I bore to the child, prevented my liſtening to the arguments, my ſiſter made uſe of, to induce me to part with my precious charge: Though ſhe painted to me the diſtreſs of her lady; which, ſhe ſaid, it was in my power to relieve, without detriment to my truſt; and what in the end would prove of infinite advantage to the child. But finding her perſuaſions had no effect, ſhe entreated of me, at leaſt, to viſit her unhappy lady; who was at an inn, in the village, waiting for my anſwer. To this I conſented, with readineſs; and taking my ſweet Henry in my arms, I followed her to the Lady. Suffice it to ſay, ſhe left nothing unattempted to gain me from my

my duty; and I too fatally yielded to her entreaties.

"Apprehenſive of future claims being made on my infant charge, by its unfortunate perents, I gave out that he died ſuddenly. The fictitious grief, that I diſplayed, impoſed on my credulous neighbours; and the little Henry, in the mean time, was ſurreptitiouſly conveyed to the lady of the knight."

"Tell me," cried Sir Edgar, ſtarting from his ſeat, with extreme emotion, "if the name of the knight was not Sir Phlip de Montford." "The ſame," returned the female, ſurpriſed. "Holy virgin!" exclaimed the youth, croſſing himſelf with devotion, "The time then approaches, that ſhall reveal the myſteries of my birth." He claſped his hands, and raiſed his eyes to heaven. Then, reſtraining his internal feelings, at obſerving the countenance of the ſtranger become pale and agitated, "Proceed," exclaimed he with impetuous eagerneſs, "you know

know not how much your ſtory intereſts me. Yet ſtay—tell me if you are acquainted with the name of the father of that unhappy babe.'

"I am," returned the woman trembling.

"Oh! then," cried Edgar, flinging himſelf at her feet, "as you hope for peace in this world, and forgiveneſs in that to come, tell the injured being, who now is ſuppliant at your feet, who was the father of the infant Henry."

The ſtranger changed colour: She gazed, with a wild and terrified air, at the agitated youth before her. "Ah heavens! It is he whom I ſeek. Yes, I ſee the traces of the infant features of my Edgar, ripened into manhood. Oh retributive Providence! and do I owe my preſervation to the injured heir of Clarence!" She ſunk fainting into the arms of the equally delighted, and grateful youth; who, combating his internal ſenſations, in pity to the wretched creature, whoſe remorſe and ſhame, at finding in him the being, ſhe had ſo much injured, had reduced her

to the ſtate, ſhe then was in,—ſupported, and aſſiſted in recovering, the author of his wrongs, with a zeal and tenderneſs, that brought tears into the eyes of the good Jerome. She now began to evince ſome ſigns of life; and, fixing her eager eyes on our hero, "Oh! thou," cried ſhe, "much injured heir of a royal houſe, who, notwithſtanding the crimes of the wretch, that has deprived thee of the honors of thy name, ſtill ſuccoureſt, with a ready arm, that guilty being; with what eyes ſhall I dare to view thy injured face? or how dare to aſk the forgiveneſs, my ſoul ſo fondly languiſhes after? Yet, if years of penitence,—of unremitted regret,—if a painful and arduous journey, to reſtore thee to what my guilt had deprived thee of,—will not move thee to forgive my crime,—think of the years thou wert the object of all my care;—of the many months thou wert foſtered in theſe arms, and received thy nouriſhment from this breaſt: and then, if thou canſt, refuſe me thy forgiveneſs; and ſee me expire at thy feet." "Oh! no," exclaim-

ed the youth, melted beyond expreſſion, and affectionately embracing her; "receive my pardon, and my thanks: as but for you, bred in the midſt of grandeur, I might have loſt that firſt of human attainments, the knowledge of myſelf."

"Generous youth," returned the widow of Arnauld, "how will it gratify thy noble heart, to hear that thou art the legitimate, and only child of the great and unfortunate Duke of Clarence!" "And *my mother*," interrupted Sir Edgar with emotion, "has quitted this world,—" "for a better," replied ſhe. The countenance of our hero fell. He ſighed deeply. "Bitter diſappointment!" ſaid he: "and I am bereaved, then, of both my parents." "But you have a noble relation in the ſiſter of your late mother, the Lady Emmeline, the Counteſs of Saliſbury; who will, with impatient arms, receive the ſon of her unfortunate ſiſter. She is prepared by me, to expect the real heir of Clarence. But you muſt be anxious to hear

the remainder of my ſtory. Having cauſed a fictitious funeral to be made, for the interment of my charge, and received, with an afflicted air, the condolences of my neighbours, who all were taught to look upon the beauteous infant, as the ſon of my deceaſed brother,—I not long after, according to agreement with the lady (to whom, only upon condition of my never being ſeparated from the child, I had conſented to her adoption of him) took a ſorrowful leave of my acquaintance,—pretending that, after the loſſes I had ſuſtained, the country I lived in, was become hateful to me; and joined her, and the dear babe.

"A year now had nearly expired, during which time Edgar (for ſo was he named, at the requeſt of Sir Philip) daily increaſed in height, and lovelineſs; and his adopted mother, and myſelf, vied which ſhould ſhew him the greateſt fondneſs: When the knight now returned from France, and, agreeable to

our

our wiſhes, embraced the ſweet boy, without ſuſpicion, as his own.

" Amongſt the knight's ſervants, was one Philip Morton; who, though he loved the little Edgar, with the utmoſt fondneſs, yet ſeemed to harbour doubts, difficult to be eraſed, reſpecting his being in reality the ſon of his maſter. Yet, as it was evident, he did not attempt to prejudice the mind of the knight againſt that belief,—little notice was taken of his incredulity. Indeed, nothing could exceed the extreme fondneſs, ſhewn by Sir Philip to his De Montford, as he would proudly call him. Never did I ſee a fonder, or more affectionate father." The eyes of our hero were ſuffuſed with tears, at this mention of his ſuppoſed parent's love. He put his hand to his heart. " Yes," cried he, " here is imprinted the kindneſs of both my parents. May their errors alike be pardoned in heaven; as they are forgotten by Edgar!" Jerome preſſed the hand of the youth, with warmth; whilſt his eyes gliſtened with admi-

ration. Upon the army's being ordered abroad," proceeded Alice, " Sir Philip, as being a ſoldier, could not refuſe to join them. Yet he could not bear to part with his De Montford. Taking the child in his arms, ' Will you, madam,' ſaid he, turning to his ſuppoſed mother, ' accompany me to France? I feel, I feel I cannot part from this boy, you have given me.' He preſſed him to his breaſt, with a father's fondneſs. ' Say, will you not oblige me, Editha?' After a little heſitation, my lady conſented; and we ſoon after left England.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

"NOT long after our arrival in France, Sir Philip was ſlain in battle. The ſcene now was changed for De Montford, no real tie binding him to my lady; and the cauſe no longer exiſting, that bound him to her, I trembled for his fate. But I had little reaſon for my fears: for, if poſſible, his ſuppoſed mother grew fonder of him, than before the death of the knight; transferring the love ſhe bore Sir Philip, to the little Edgar. However, to our inexpreſſible grief, the ſweet boy was ſoon torn from our arms; as the Lord de Clifford, to whom was left the guardianſhip of his perſon, ſent an order to

my lady, to ſend him immediately to England, by Philip Morton, the confidential ſervant of the deceaſed knight. A promiſe, however, was given his mother, that Edgar ſhould conſtantly viſit her, on her return to England.

" In the firſt paroxiſms of grief, and diſappointment, at this cruel order, my lady determined to avow the real birth of the child: But, upon her cooler moments of reflection, ſhe felt how deſpicable her character would appear, by ſuch an imprudent declaration; and that, upon an inveſtigation, which would naturally be the conſequence, the child, moſt probably, would be reſtored to his true parents. Having maturely weighed theſe conſiderations, ſhe, though reluctantly, conſented to deliver up the boy.

" The parting was tender, and affecting, on both ſides. Edgar, at this period, had juſt turned his fourth year; and was uncommonly tall and manly for his age. He clung to his mother

mother and me; and refuſed reſolutely to go with Philip. 'Why muſt I leave you, mamma?' ſaid he, looking with an affecting earneſtneſs in her face: 'I do not know this man, Philip is going to take me to. Ah! if my father was not dead, you would not ſend away your Edgar: But you do not love me now. And Alice too, that ſo often has told me, that, though all ſhould hate, and leave De Montford, ſhe never would, ſhe alſo gives me up to this lord, whom I hate; and ſends me away.' My lady could not anſwer theſe pathetic interrogatories, and intreaties; but wept over the ſweet boy, as ſhe claſped him to her breaſt. 'Be gone Philip, (ſaid he, in a commanding tone and geſture, at ſeeing we ſeconded not his departure) do not you ſee, that my mamma will keep her Edgar? What do you ſtand there for?' Philip ſmiled through his tears. My lady now, paſſionately embracing the dear child, gave him to me, I wept; I invoked innumerable bleſſings on his head, and ſecretly implored forgiveneſs of heaven, for my injuſtice. The

time after his departure, hung heavy on our hands; ſo lively, ſo ſweet, ſo amiable in his diſpoſition, was De Montford, that my lady found not at firſt the great loſs, ſhe had ſuſtained in Sir Philip.

" Editha Howel, the ſuppoſed mother of Edgar, was collaterally a deſcendant of the Norfolk family: But, being a young woman of high and ungovernable paſſions, ſhe had, without the knowledge, and afterwards againſt the concurrence of her relations, formed an attachment with Sir Philip de Montford. Finding them reſolutely bent againſt this alliance, ſhe framed the project of eloping with her lover; and in a ſhort time put her ſecret determination into practice.

" Sir Philip received her with tranſport; but both being young and volatile, the marriage was delayed, till the lady too late had found, how dangerous a thing it was, to truſt to the honour of a young and enamoured ſoldier. Sir Philip began to cool, and Editha

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to reflect. In a ſhort time, the parties mutually recriminated; and the faults of each other were ſeverely examined. Sir Philip was ungrateful; and the lady was ſullen, reſentful, and jealous. Theſe continual bickerings deſtroyed all the happineſs, the knight once had enjoyed in her company; and the unfortunate Editha was abandoned. It was at this time, ſhe formed the idea, on reading the letter I had written to my ſiſter, who lived with her, of ſecuring the child, which Providence ſeemed to have pointed out, as the means of effecting a reconciliation, between her and the man ſhe hourly regretted. I need not repeat, that the ſcheme ſucceeded to her wiſh; and Sir Philip again became the fond, the attentive lover; and would, I am perſuaded, if death had not intervened, have married her. In a few months after the departure of her adopted ſon, my lady detached from her family, by her imprudent conduct, and having now no tie to bind her to the world, ſince the death of Sir Philip, and the

ſeparation from Edgar, entered the convent of ——, and ſoon after took the vows.

Though I followed not her example, in the latter reſpect; yet I would not forſake her: and, accordingly, was received as a boarder, in the ſame covent. Many years elapſed, during which time, my lady ſent continual letters to her ſuppoſed ſon: But no anſwers being returned, ſhe at laſt gave up all inquiry concerning him; juſtly conjecturing, that new attachments had effaced her remembrance from his heart."

Sir Edgar now, with eager impatience to vindicate himſelf, aſſured his foſter-mother, that no letters by him had ever been received: That in the courſe of a few months, after his return to England, the Lord de Clifford, with his whole family, had retired from court. That that nobleman, being incenſed at ſome accounts, which he had heard of his reputed mother's miſconduct, and her not returning to England, nor inquiring concerning him,

him, had ceaſed all correſpondence with her, in conſequence of her ſuppoſed diſregard for her character, or the ties of nature. Alice ſeemed pleaſed at this aſſurance; and continued her narrative.

"About a twelve month ſince," purſued ſhe, "my lady one morning ſent to me. 'Alice,' ſaid ſhe, 'the injuſtice I have been guilty of, towards an innocent youth, hangs heavy at my heart: And laſt night methought, a noble pair approached my bedſide, and, with a menacing air, demanded of me their child; denouncing vengeance on my guilty head, if I did not immediately acknowledge my crime to the Lady Saliſbury, and prepare her to receive de Montford, as the long loſt child of her ſiſter Emmeline. Frequently,' continued ſhe, 'am I haunted by theſe dreams. Go, then, Alice, as you love me, and diſcover to the family of Lord Hertford, that their Henry ſtill lives. Alas! perhaps his unhappy parents ſurvived not his loſs. Wretch that I am, to have taken advantage of their mis-

misfortunes! my repentance then may come too late to relieve their aching hearts; but may reſtore their lawful heir to his undoubted rights. Nor ſhall the ſhades of everlaſting night deſcend upon my unatoned offences.'

" I promiſed, with unaffected joy, to perform this act of juſtice; and ſoon after departed from France. A gleam of pleaſure brightened the faded features of Editha, on my leaving her. 'How ſhall I thank you, my friend, my kind Alice, for undertaking this journey, to reſtore my peace! Ah! already I feel a foretaſte of that ſerenity, which will pervade my ſoul, when conſcious that I have rendered juſtice to injured innocence. Yet, O that before theſe eyes were for ever cloſed, I could be aſſured, that our De Montford (for ſtill muſt I call him ſo) were in poſſeſſion of thoſe honours, which my heart tells me he is heir to! That from him I ſhould receive forgiveneſs of my injuſtice! Alas! before that time arrive, I ſhall be no more: Death

Death will deprive me of the only event, that I would wiſh to be a witneſs of.'

" Upon my arrival in England, I immediately viſited Warwickſhire; deſirous of hearing, if any inquiry had been made after the little Henry, before I ventured into the preſence of Lady Saliſbury. Although many changes had taken place, ſince I had left my former reſidence; yet ſome of my old acquaintance ſtill dwelt in the village: And from them I learnt, that an inquiry had been made after Stephen, and the child, about a twelvemonth after I had quitted the country. That the young man who had made the inquiries, ſeemed very much grieved to hear of the death of the child; who, he ſaid, was come of great parents, on whom, for many reaſons, his loſs would fall very heavy: And he dreaded taking back the account. That he had alſo aſked many queſtions concerning me; and was vexed that none of them could inform him, where I was to be found.

" Pleaſed

"Pleaſed at this intelligence, after remaining a few days with a young couple, to whom I had let my houſe, and who had received the young man, that had been ſent in queſt of my charge, I departed for the ſeat of the Counteſs, having taken firſt their directions how to proceed. On my arrival at that noble lady's, though ſhe was in deep affliction, for the recent death of her lord; yet, as I was poor, and my countenance pallid and ſickly, ſhewed I was an object of compaſſion, I was not long in gaining the audience I deſired. My terrors at feeling myſelf in the preſence of one, whoſe ſiſter I had ſo highly injured, ſo much overcame me, that I was ſcarcely able to ſupport my agitated frame. With a voice of the moſt ſoothing ſoftneſs, ſhe intreated me to compoſe my ſpirits, and inſiſted on my being ſeated: But I could not long remain ſo. Having entreated ſhe would diſmiſs her attendants, I caſt myſelf at her feet, and confeſſed the crime I had been guilty of; producing, alſo, as a confirmation of the truth of

my

my ſtory, the jewels, which had been faſtened about the little Henry's neck.

"Never did I ſee pleaſure, ſurpriſe, joy, ſo blended in a countenance, as in that of Lady Saliſbury, during my recital. She queſtioned me over and over, reſpecting my tale; and finding all my accounts correſponded, ſhe claſped her hands with emotion: Then, looking up towards heavens; 'and does there yet remain a relic of my Emmeline on earth! Ah! now is my dream explained. Yes, yes, my beloved ſiſter, your Conſtance will preſerve her life, till ſhe ſee's juſtice done thy offspring. Dear is he already to this heart. Yet, little did I think, that noble youth, whom my lord would often write to me of, in terms the moſt exalted, was the ſon of my Emmeline. Ah! how does every circumſtance evince the truth! His conqueſt of Buchan, the likeneſs he bore to the houſe of Lancaſter, which would often fill my Saliſbury with ſurpriſe, all prove him to be the ſon of Clarence.'

"I

" I had little occaſion," continued Alice, " to plead for pardon: The delight which filled the boſom of Lady Saliſbury at my intelligence, prevented her from feeling the ſmalleſt reſentment, towards her who had diſcovered ſo great a treaſure; though it was the wretch, who had ſo long robbed her of it. And, inſtead of the reproaches, I ſo highly merited, I was loaded with thanks and preſents.

" Having according to my directions, diſpatched a meſſenger, empowered to ſearch the coffin, in which it was ſuppoſed the remains of the child were laid, and which I had filled with dirt, and rubbiſh, heavy enough to impoſe belief on the bearer, the Counteſs, in a few days, was fully ſatisfied, that the ſuppoſed ſon of Sir Philip was no other than her nephew. During this time, I learnt from Lady Saliſbury, that her ſiſter, the Lady Emmeline, had been privately married to the Duke of Clarence; and that, by accident, the fruits of their marriage having been diſcovered

covered to her father, the Earl of Hertford, upon her refuſing to name the father of her child, the Earl incenſed had it conveyed away. But, upon the death of the king, the prince having avowed his marriage, the unhappy grandfather learnt, that the little Henry was no more. This, and ſome other family afflictions, the Counteſs farther informed me, ſoon after put a period to his exiſtence: And ſhe had the misfortune, in the courſe of a very few years after, to loſe the Lady Emmeline; who ſurvived her lord only a few months.

" As Lady Saliſbury was unacquainted with any of the family of the generous protector of her nephew, yet knew that an only daughter had been left by the Lord de Clifford, ſhe ſent to that lady, ſuppoſing her ſtill a reſident at the Caſtle, the ſeat of her father the Baron, to learn ſome tidings of Edgar. But, to our great mortification, the Lady Elfrida had for ſome time left the Caſtle, and reſided, till ſhe came of age, with her guardian, the Earl of Mortagne: And the domeſtics

meſtics declared themſelves ignorant of what fate had befallen Mr. Edgar, as they called him; though all profeſſed the high regard, they held him in, for his many amiable qualities.

" Meſſengers were now diſpatched to the Earl of Mortagne, from the Counteſs, requeſting to know the lateſt intelligence, that had been received of Sir Edgar de Montford: When the ſervants returned with the comfortleſs news, that the Earl, after commending himſelf to the Lady Saliſbury, declared his ſorrow at being obliged to inform her, that the youth, whom ſhe had earneſtly inquired after, was generally ſuppoſed to be ſlain, in an engagement abroad; as no accounts had lately been received of him. This was a ſevere blow on the Counteſs, after having raiſed her hopes ſo high. She again relapſed into that ſtate of melancholy deſpondence, from which only the idea of yet embracing the long loſt child of her beloved ſiſter had reſtored her.

" Grieved,

" Grieved, diſappointed, and viewing myſelf the primary cauſe of this misfortune,—whilſt I fancied, that the eyes of Lady Saliſbury continually reproached me with my crime, I ſickened under theſe complicated evils, and was long a victim to a painful and dangerous diſorder. To the kindneſs and unremitted attention of the beſt, and moſt noble minded of her ſex, am I indebted, for my recovery from that illneſs, which the pangs of internal remorſe had reduced me to. Upon the entire reſtoration of my health, I turned mine eyes towards France. I beheld, in my imagination, your reputed mother, the unhappy and penitent Editha, vainly expecting every hour my return; and ſtretched upon her couch of ſorrow, labouring under a ſimilar indiſpoſition with mine, bereaved of that friend, to whom ſhe was wont to unboſom the ſorrows of her heart. Mine reproached me for my length of ſtay, as I already had exceeded a year; and I imparted to my generous benefactreſs the obligations, which impelled me, contrary to my wiſhes, to leave

leave her. That noble lady approved my determination, and inſiſted on paying the expences of my journey. At the ſame time, ſhe kindly commanded me, never to forget, that her houſe would receive me, whenever I ſhould be deprived of my friend. With eyes and a heart overflowing with gratitude, I bade adieu to the beneficent Counteſs: When having, during the courſe of my journey, had the misfortune to be again attacked by illneſs, I was inhumanly robbed of the chief part of the ſum, which your benevolent relation had furniſhed me with, for the expences of my journey.

"Being now deprived of the conveniences for travelling, that my age and recent ſickneſs required, I had been forced to proceed on foot, from the place where I landed, to that ſpot, where, overcome with fatigue and indiſpoſition, I was nearly ſinking to the ground, when heaven ſent to my relief, the moſt generous of men."

She

She pauſed; and Sir Edgar, too highly gratified by her relation, to pain her by making the ſmalleſt reflection on her conduct, tried to reconcile her too conſcious ſpirit to itſelf, by extoling that high ſenſe of duty, which could make her, in ſpite of age and infirmities, encounter difficulties, ſo unequal to her ſtrength; and avow, with ingenuouſneſs, the commiſſion of a crime, which few minds could be great enough to bear the humiliation of confeſſing. Thus did he try to reconcile and re-aſſure the ſelf-condemned, but delighted Alice; who received theſe generous approvals of our hero, with that admiration and gratitude they merited. Never did ſhe ſeem weary of queſtioning him, about what had befallen him, ſince they had been ſeparated; of applauding a conduct whoſe merit the modeſty of Sir Edgar prevented his but half diſcloſing; and of tracing in his fine and manly features, thoſe of her beloved Henry.

Jerome

Jerome now congratulated the youth, on the flattering proſpects, that preſented themſelves to his view; mixing, with his felicitations, many ſalutary and juſt obſervations, on the goodneſs of that Providence, which had led him, by means of the commiſſion of a good action, to the knowledge of his exalted birth.

On the morrow, notwithſtanding his impatience to return to England, after the diſcovery ſo important to his happineſs, did Sir Edgar propoſe viſiting his reputed mother. 'I have obligations to her,' ſaid the youth, 'and will not deny an unfortunate and dying penitent, the ſatisfaction my preſence and entire forgiveneſs will afford.' Accordingly the day following, accompanied by Alice, our hero proceeded to the convent of ———. But alas! heaven, as if to avenge the injuries of De Montford, forbade the meeting: And the unhappy Editha had expired, a few hours only, previous to their arrival. Having performed this duty to humanity, Sir Edgar, after liberally

liberally rewarding the faithful and penitent Alice, turned his thoughts towards England. Once more he viſited the friendly Anchoret, and obtained a promiſe, that, when his fortunes ſhould be eſtabliſhed, he would abandon his cell, and reſide with him: Having convinced, by the force and energy of his argument, that holy man, that becoming an uſeful member of ſociety, inſtructing the ignorant, and reprehending the vicious, was a more acceptable ſervice to the Creator of all things, than a ſecluſion from a world, in which we were placed, to benefit by our example.

Hiſtory now requires, we ſhould return to the Hall of Saliſbury; where we left the Counteſs of Mortague, Alfred, and Elfrida, impatiently awaiting her promiſed hiſtory.

CHAP. VIII.

"OF the three children," ſaid the Counteſs, "which my father the Earl of Hertford had, I was the eldeſt, and am now the only ſurvivor. My ſiſter was three years of age, and I five, when death deprived us of our mother: we were both, however, at that period too young, to be ſenſible of the greatneſs of our loſs; though without being conſcious of the reaſon, we ſoon experienced a manifeſt alteration, in the behaviour of our now only parent towards us."

"Naturally of an auſtere, haughty, and unrelenting temper, my father, only from the high

high eſteem, and almoſt reverence, with which he held my mother's mild remonſtrance, and advice, curbed, and partly, during her life time, ſubdued thoſe ſtrong prejudices, and reſentments, which, notwithſtanding the many amiable qualities he otherwiſe poſſeſſed, were the prevailing features of his character. The charm, which had ſoftened his natural harſhneſs of diſpoſition, fled with her life; and the death of a woman, whom he fondly loved, added to the unpleaſing idea of having the education of two girls to attend to, contributed greatly to increaſe the ſeverity of his nature. However, having been fortunate enough to meet with a young woman of ſmall fortune, though of a reſpectable birth, who had formerly lived as companion to my mother, he engaged her as governeſs to us; and for ſeveral years, without beſtowing farther trouble or thought concerning us, we were left to the entire guidance of the good Adeline; who, ſenſible of the greatneſs of her charge, ſpared no pains to render us, in every reſpect, accompliſhed, and worthy of

our high birth. My father, occupied with his employments at Court, and his aſſiduous attention to the improvements of my brother, Lord Howard, whoſe education was, he ſaid, of the utmoſt importance, as one who would perpetuate to poſterity the honours of his name, ſeldom for more than half an hour, in the courſe of the day, permitted us to his preſence: and, though arrived at an age, at which moſt young women, are preſented to the world, we were, from not having the advantage of any female relation to introduce us, and my father, through negligence and inattention, not perceiving the alteration, that a lapſe of twelve years had made in both our perſons, ſuffered us to remain ſtill immured, within the pale of a nurſery.

" Emmeline, (for ſo was my ſiſter named) as ſhe advanced in years, diſplayed an uncommon brilliancy of imagination, and livelineſs of temper, accompanied, at the ſame time, with a degree of quick ſenſibility, that fre-

frequently pained her to exceſs: and a ſudden cloud would oft times baniſh the ſmiling ſunſhine, which irradiated her lovely countenance, and dim with tears thoſe eyes, which but a moment before had been illuminated with a brilliancy, that no language can do juſtice to. On the contrary, I poſſeſſed a diſpoſition even, and ſomewhat inclined to penſiveneſs. Yet, though I might want the ſprightly vein, which my ſiſter was miſtreſs of, I had the advantage, of bearing with greater calmneſs and compoſure, the little diſappointments, incident to infantine days: and not unfrequently ſhe had occaſion to apply to me for advice, or conſolation, when her livelineſs, or ſome youthful indiſcretions, had drawn on her the cenſures of Adeline our governeſs.

"The preſence of my father, from the ſeverity of his temper, and the auſterity of his manners, was almoſt a puniſhment to the lively Emmeline; as ſhe was forced to put an entire reſtraint on her natural diſpoſition,

when in his company, and aſſume an air of gravity, foreign to her nature. Frequently would ſhe divert me with lively ſallies of her imagination, after ſhe had been doing penance, as ſhe uſed to ſtile the formal viſits we made our parent; who never ſhewed us the ſmalleſt indulgence, or love. The follies of the old courtiers, who occaſionally were with the Earl, when we made theſe viſits of ceremony, affcrded my ſiſter ample ſcope to diſplay the luxuriance of her fancy, in the ridiculous light, in which ſhe never failed to place them."

"Our good Adeline, though ſhe admired the brilliancy of her imagination, would often try to check this talent as dangerous: and though for a moment, her remonſtrances repreſſed the keenneſs of her ſatire; yet they were forgotten, when a new object of ridicule called it forth. The goodneſs of her heart, and generoſity of temper, prevented this vein of humour from ever being offenſive, but to the proud, the arrogant, or the affect-

affected. The humble, though faulty, ſhe tried to encourage, by an extreme affability, and condeſcenſion; and thoſe who openly profeſſed their vices, or ſeemed to glory in the commiſſion of them, Emmeline beheld as too much beneath her, either to ſatirize, or even to hold converſe with. The uncommon beauty ſhe poſſeſſed, began now to attract the obſervation of every one who ſaw her; and at laſt gained the attention of my father, who hoped to aggrandize his family by her charms.

"We were now introduced at court; where the novelty of our appearance excited the general attention of the courtiers, who vied with each other, who ſhould ſhew the greateſt marks of reſpect, and admiration, to the two fair Howards, as we were called. Many were the offers which my father refuſed for us, from various cauſes, and deficiencies of rank or fortune.

" I have not yet named my brother, at that time Lord Howard; one of the handſomeſt and moſt accompliſhed nobleman of the age he lived in; of a diſpoſition noble, generous, and affectionate. He loved my ſiſter and me, with the tendereſt emotions of fraternal love. Frequently when, in our more youthful days, our hearts were filled with the moſt painful ſenſations, at the harſhneſs of my father's treatment, he would, when retired from his preſence, follow us to our chamber; endeavour to ſoften and calm our grief, with words dictated by the moſt brotherly kindneſs He would tell us, that we ſhould allow for the ſeverity of our parent's manners, by reminding us of the loſs he had ſuſtained, in the death of our mother; which had given that unrelenting auſterity to them. Emmeline then, with a quickneſs natural to her, would reply; 'Ah Edmund! but you bear not with his temper; you poſſeſs all his love, and experience not his ſeverity.' 'I acknowledge, my Emmeline,' would he anſwer, 'that my father ſhews a partial

partial favour to his ſon: But think not, my beloved ſiſters, that I poſſeſs all his love. Ah! happy would your brother be, to be an equal ſharer with his ſiſters, in the tenderneſs of their parent. Believe me, Emmeline, it is not with indifference, your brother views this unjuſt preference.' My ſiſter then would fly to his arms, and entreat forgiveneſs for her petulance. Dear youth (exclaimed the Counteſs, breaking off her narrative, to wipe away the tear of tender ſorrow, that the memory of her brother had excited) how were thy proſpects, thy promiſed happineſs in life, blaſted by the harſh commands of an imperious father; who, deaf to the pleadings of nature, and the moſt amiable of ſons, ſacrificed his peace at the ſhrine of ambition!

"Unfortunately for my brother, the rich heireſs of Beaufort's Duke, a young woman not deficient in perſonal charms, but haughty, jealous, and imperious, and proud of her birth, and vaſt fortunes, which made her an object ſought after, even by princes,—was captivated

with his elegant manners and manly graces; and declared to her father, who continually urged her to marry, that Lord Howard was the only man, she would ever consent to an union with. The duke, who almost idolized his daughter, notwithstanding my brother, in point of fortune, was by no means a match for her,—could not deny so beloved an object (and one who from her infancy, had never been denied her slightest wish) what she repeatedly declared, depended the happiness of her life; and, accordingly, the ill-fated Edmund fell the sacrifice to her wishes. For dreading the renunciation, which my father threatened, in case of disobedience, he consented rather to part with happiness, than incur eternal banishment, from the presence of a parent whom he fondly loved.

"Emmeline and I would exhaust our endeavours to sooth the deep anguish that took possession of the soul of the noble youth, at the thoughts of his approaching nuptials. We tried to fire his imagination, by painting the honours

honours that would await him, on ſo ſplendid an alliance. But my brother, too refined in his ideas of happineſs, to let ſuch arguments weigh a moment with him, would turn from us in ſilent anguiſh,—unwilling we ſhould perceive his inward feelings. At length the day arrived, ſo dreaded by all but my father, that was to give to my brother ſplendid miſery. The marriage was ſolemnized with all the pomp and magnificence which wealth and power could beſtow; and tournaments and ſhews laſted many days, after the nuptials had taken place.

Unhappily for the peace of my ſiſter, the Duke of Clarence, fourth ſon of Henry, honoured my brother, by being preſent at his marriage; and ſtaid at my father's palace, during the celebration of the feſtivals, which were made on that account.

" That prince, from the firſt moment of Emmeline's preſentation to him, ſeemed ſtruck with her uncommon charms: Her

lively feelings, accompanied by a dignity of manners peculiar to herſelf, gave to every action a charm, that penetrated to his ſoul, and inſpired at once his love and admiration. Mutually formed with powers to pleaſe, they ſeemed to take an equal ſhare in the pleaſure, ariſing from the company of each other; and the intimacy that took place, from the occaſion of their meeting, proved but too fatal to their future tranquillity.

" With a form graceful and commanding, the prince, though courteous and affable, poſſeſſed a certain air of grandeur, a conſciouſneſs of his exalted birth,—that created awe, and precluded ſocial intercourſe, but with thoſe he honoured with his friendſhip.

" Emmeline, unconſcious of her danger, gave way, without conſideration, to the new and pleaſing ſenſations, that filled her boſom; and felt confuſedly delighted at the raillery of my brother, on the impreſſion her charms had made on the duke; who without reflection,

flection, continually adding fuel to a flame, unhappily already too much kindled, by his praiſes of his royal friend.

" Of a temper uncommonly ſanguine, my ſiſter looked on the proſpect before her, with the moſt innocent delight; and thought no pleaſure could be ſo great, as that of appearing amiable in the eyes of Clarence.

" The Marchioneſs, my ſiſter-in-law, (for on her marriage with my brother, a marquiſate, which, in default of male heirs, lay dormant in the family, was granted him by the king) had taken a ſtrong fancy to the Lady Emmeline; and, on her and her lord's departure, entreated of my father, to allow of her ſpending ſometime with them, at Howard Grove. My father, after ſome heſitation, reluctantly conſented. This was the firſt parting, that had ever taken place between my ſiſter and me; and we were mutually affected by it. It ſeemed, from the greatneſs of our ſorrow, that we equally experienced a fatal

fatal preſage, that miſery would be the conſequence of our ſeparation. We tore ourſelves from each other's arms, in an agony of grief. 'Ah! deareſt Emmeline,' cried I, as ſhe quitted me, 'think that on your happineſs depends your ſiſter's. Be careful of it, therefore, as you value mine. Ah! that you were once more returned ſafe to theſe arms! then would this anxious breaſt be freed from terrors, which occupy it, at the thought of your leaving me! I know not how to account for the ſecret foreboding, which tells me, that ſome evil threatens my beloved ſiſter.' Emmeline tried to ſmile away the emotion, my words gave riſe to. 'Do not, my deareſt Conſtance,' cried ſhe, returning, 'give way to ſuch vain apprehenſions. Are you not the partner of my every thought? My friend, my counſellor? never can I act wrong, when I have ſuch advice as my ſiſter's to fly to.' Ah deareſt Emmeline! cried the Counteſs, happy had it been, had you repoſed that confidence you promiſed.

Then

Then would your Conſtance, not now have to mourn a ſiſter.

" Emmeline," continued Lady Saliſbury, " wrote frequently to me, on her firſt arrival at the Grove. In her firſt letters, ſhe named the expected coming of the Prince; who had promiſed the Marquis, to ſpend a few weeks with him. Her next brought me the dreaded intelligence, that he was arrived. The animated ſtile and warmth of praiſe, when ſhe ſpoke of Clarence, alarmed me. I wrote to her, in terms dictated by the tendereſt anxiety for her happineſs, to warn her of her danger. I painted, in the moſt forcible language, the miſeries ſhe was laying up to herſelf, by indulging the predilection, ſhe entertained for the Duke; pointing out the inſuperable bars, that muſt neceſſarily impede their union.

" Alas! from that time, my Emmeline's letters were ſhort, and evidently conſtrained; without noticing my anxious cares for her peace, ſhe forbore a re-mention of the Prince.

Prince. Little, however, by this forbearance did ſhe leſſen my anxiety; and I fancied an unuſual coldneſs had ſupplied the place of confidential love: That every line ſpoke, that I was no more the loved ſiſter of Emmeline. I confined my apprehenſions to my boſom, and diſdained to reproach the dear ungrateful girl, with the change in her ſentiments. Yet, bitterly I wept the loſs of her affections.

" A month had expired, after the time had elapſed, that my father had allowed my ſiſter to be abſent; but my brother, by various excuſes, had protracted her ſtay: When my father ſent for me to him. His countenance expreſſed pleaſure. " You muſt write immediately to your ſiſter, Conſtance, (ſaid he) and command her, from me, to return without delay. A propoſal has been made to me, that is infinitely beyond my hopes, for a girl like her of ſmall fortunes.'

" I

" I ſtarted—I felt for my poor Emmeline; whoſe affections were, I was well convinced, too deeply engaged, to admit of receiving the addreſſes of another, without the extremeſt pain. My father obſerved my emotion, and rallied me on it. 'What? you are vexed, Conſtance,' ſaid his Lordſhip, gaily, 'that your ſiſter ſhould get the ſtart of you, I find: But never mind; I will ſoon provide for you.' 'You miſtake me, my Lord,' cried I, 'my concern proceeds for my ſiſter; who is entirely unprepared for ſuch an event, as your Lordſhip hints will take place.' 'Oh, if that is all,' returned he, 'ſet your heart at reſt: There is no woman, but would be charmed at gaining the affections of ſuch a man as Lord Saliſbury.' 'Ah! my Lord,' replied I, emboldened by the idea of Emmeline's ſufferings, 'but my ſiſter may not behold the Earl, in the partial light your Lordſhip does.' 'Then a convent muſt receive her,' interrupted my father angrily; 'but I will not have theſe ſuppoſitions made. It is the duty of my daughters

daughters to be ſatisfied, with the choice I make for them. Look to it, therefore, Conſtance, when it is your turn; nor preſume to form romantic notions, on a ſubject, that every day ſhews the folly of indulging.' I dared not anſwer this arbitrary command, otherwiſe than by a ſtarting tear, which excited his anger; and he ſent me from him, highly diſpleaſed.

" Fearful of my giving any encouragement to Emmeline, that might thwart his favourite views, he wrote himſelf to the Marquis, demanding my ſiſter's immediate return, without aſſigning any reaſon for his abrupt command. Adeline was ſent to conduct her home; and the day following ſhe returned. But ah! how changed was her appearance! A deep dejection, and thoughtfulneſs, had taken place of that ſweet vivacity, which was wont to enliven and charm all around her. My father ſlightly noticed the alteration of her manners; on which my ſiſter, forcing a ſmile, promiſed to re-aſſume her accuſtomed

ſpirits

ſpirits on the morrow, when her fatigue ſhould be worn off.

" The delight I felt at her return, was damped by this viſible change. When retired to our chamber, I embraced, and again welcomed her home. Though ſhe received my endearments with the utmoſt affection; yet ſhe ſeemed to have loſt that lively warmth, that deſire of interchange of thought, or ſentiment, which once ſo ſtrictly cemented our friendſhip. Deeply as I felt this difference of conduct, I would not ſeem to obſerve her want of confidence in her ſiſter. I rallied her about the prince. ' Ah! my Conſtance,' cried ſhe, greatly confuſed, ' forbear a ſubject, that you have ſo often cautioned me againſt indulging in.' ' Forgive me, Emmeline,' returned I, ' for recalling a ſubject, which, I am happy to ſee, my anxious concern for your happineſs has convinced you of the prudence of baniſhing from your memory.' The dear girl was much agitated. To relieve her confuſion, I took

no

no notice of her emotion; but changed the diſcourſe, and inquired concerning the happineſs of our brother, and of the manner, in which ſhe had ſpent her time at the Grove. Her replies to the latter queſtion were confuſed, ſhort, and evaſive. I trembled for my ſiſter: I dreaded her having committed ſome imprudency, ſanctioned by the Marchioneſs, which might for ever embitter her future days. Finding her reſerved, and apparently diſtreſſed, in her anſwers to both my interrogatories,—particularly when ſhe mentioned the Marchioneſs,—I deſiſted from all farther inquiry. 'I ſee,' ſaid I mournfully, 'that I have loſt my ſiſter; and my fears have proved but too true. And is it for this, I have mourned the abſence of my Emmeline; and counted the hours till her return?—to ſee myſelf at once bereft of her confidence and love?—one comfort, however, is afforded me, in my grief; to know that I merit not the change in her regards.' My eyes filled with tears. She was affected. 'I am not changed, my Conſtance,' cried ſhe,

ſhe, tenderly preſſing my hand; 'heaven knows, I feel no abatement in my affections, for the beſt of ſiſters. It is the jealouſy of your love only that makes you dubious of mine.' I ſhook my head. 'Ah! Emmeline,' cried I, 'would to heaven, my ſuſpicions injured you! but you look fatigued; and I will not longer keep you from the reſt you need.' The dear girl threw herſelf in my arms, and wept. 'In truth, my Conſtance, I need repoſe: Spare me but to-night; and no longer I will have reſerves with ſuch a ſiſter.'

"Alas! ſhe partook not of the reſt that her exhauſted frame required. Frequently, during the night, I heard her ſigh, as if her heart would burſt; and the pain that I knew was preparing for her, on the morrow, kept me waking. At breakfaſt, the next morning, my father opened the ſubject, by telling her the wiſh he had, of ſeeing us both well eſtabliſhed, before death took him from us; and that the Earl of Saliſbury had honoured him

him by a declaration, that an alliance with his houſe would confer perfect happineſs upon him. 'I need not ſay, my daughter,' continued his Lordſhip, ſmiling ſignificantly upon Emmeline, 'that it is you, who have made a conqueſt of this renowned chief. My ſending for you home, is a ſufficient intimation of your good fortune, and my pleaſure.'

"During this ſpeech of my father, I read the deep anguiſh of the unhappy Emmeline, in the varied colour of her face. A deadly paleneſs at laſt pervaded her whole countenance; and, as he finiſhed, ſhe ſunk motionleſs in her chair. The Earl ſeemed confounded, and loudly called for aſſiſtance. I vainly hoped, from the concern that he apparently felt, that he would ſhew ſome compaſſion for his child, when he came to know that her affections were engaged. Upon our united applications, ſhe preſently recovered; yet the diſtreſs that was painted in her eyes,

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as ſhe fixed them on me, told me at once, that my fears were verified.

" As ſhe revived, my father quitted the room; and, though he ſaid nothing, I ſaw his ſuſpicions were excited. Having diſmiſſed the attendants, the dear girl, in an agony of tears, caſt herſelf on my boſom. " Oh my friend! my ſiſter! what a miſerable being is your Emmeline! How ſhall I bear the curſes and rage of an incenſed father! For never can I wed Lord Saliſbury.' 'I trembled. ' Conſider, my Emmeline, I beſeech you,' cried I, ' the miſeries, you will heap upon yourſelf, by perſevering in this raſh reſolve. Alas! you know too well, to need my deſcribing it, the violence of my father's temper, when oppoſed. Conquer then, if poſſible, this fatal predilection, that you have ſuffered yourſelf to feel for the duke; and think on the raſhneſs, and folly of indulging it. Can you imagine, for one moment, that the king will conſent to his ſon's union with the portionleſs daughter of an Earl? or that my

my father, ſtrict as his notions of honour are, would ſuffer the ſon of his ſovereign to wed clandeſtinely?' 'Oh! my Conſtance, it is not neceſſary to deſcribe my miſery. Too well I know, what I have to encounter. Yet urge me not to wed Lord Saliſbury. There are bars inſuperable, which forbid our union.' I ſhuddered with apprehenſion. At that moment, a meſſage arrived from my father, demanding my preſence. 'Plead for me, my ſiſter,' cried ſhe, graſping my hand, as I quitted her; 'implore mercy for the unhappy Emmeline.'

"The tears were in my eyes, as I entered my father's chamber. He haſtily inquired after my ſiſter. 'What mean theſe tears, Conſtance?' demanded my father, angrily. 'I hope Emmeline is not averſe to Lord Saliſbury. I like not theſe faintings. But ſhould ſhe be perverſe enough, for this to be the caſe, ſhe muſt conquer her diſinclination, and ſee him cheerfully this evening. So prepare her for his coming.' I took courage,

and

and repreſented the indiſpoſition of my ſiſter, as a plea for her not ſeeing the Earl that evening; without hinting at her repugnance to the match, which I knew would only exaſperate him. The Earl darted a penetrating glance at me. 'Beware of deceiving me, girl,' ſaid he; 'but if Emmeline is really as unwell as you deſcribe, I will excuſe, this evening, her ſeeing Lord Saliſbury. This night, therefore, I conſent to humour her: But look to it, Conſtance, I will not be dallied with: I bear not with it. To night, therefore, you muſt entertain the noble Earl; to-morrow, your ſiſter; ſatisfied with having granted her this reprieve.' I flew to the chamber of my ſiſter; who received me with gratitude and joy. But ſhe was ſo overcome with what had paſſed in the morning, that though I was, beyond meaſure, anxious to know her real ſituation, in regard to Clarence; yet I would not begin a ſubject, that might more diſtreſs her that day.

CHAP. IX.

"IN the evening the Earl arrived. I dreaded ſeeing him. I looked upon him as the author of all my ſiſter's pain. I depicted him to my fancy, in the moſt odious light. I knew from report he was not young; as he had been the chief inſtructor of the Prince of Wales, in the ſcience of war, and was looked upon to be the moſt complete warrior of the age. The conqueror of nations, and bred amid camps and war, was Saliſbury a huſband for the tender and beauteous Emmeline? But how did my diſguſt ſubſide, on the firſt view I had of the Earl! Ah! he was the reverſe of the haughty ferocious

rocious chieftan, my buſy fancy had pictured him to be.

" Lord Saliſbury was about the middle age; a manly grace had taken place of the fine bloom of youth. He was tall, and finely proportioned. Without being handſome, never did I behold a countenance, more intreſting and engaging. The benignity of his ſmile did away that kind of awe which at firſt you felt inſpired with, from an air of martial grandeur, and innate nobleneſs, that was diffuſed throughout his perſon. My father preſented me to him. With an air the moſt engaging, he ſaluted me. ' You are bleſt, my Lord,' ſaid he, ' in two daughters, whoſe charms outvie the boaſted beauties of our European courts.' My father bowed, and ſeemed gratified by the compliment.

" The Earl's eyes were bent anxiouſly towards the door. My father obſerved it. ' My Lord,' cried he confuſedly, ' my daughter, Emmeline, entreats excuſe, for not

ſeeing your Lordſhip; overcome with the fatigues of her journey, ſhe defers till the morrow that pleaſure.' Saliſbury expreſſed his concern and diſappointment; and his penetrating eye ſeemed to ſearch mine, for farther explanation of my ſiſter's abſence; whilſt I, painfully conſcious, tried to retreat from the ſcrutiny of his glance.

" Though he eſſayed to be chearful, yet a certain gravity, and manifeſt concern, ſeemed ſtruggling with his efforts. I already felt intereſted in his favour. Never had the hours ſeemed to fly ſo ſwiftly, as during his viſit. At length he aroſe to depart; and having demanded the liberty of repeating his viſit on the morrow, he took leave. ' Ah Emmeline!' exclaimed I, ' when united to ſuch a man as Saliſbury, who would pity you!'

" As I ſtood gazing at his graceful form, while he aſcended his chariot, my vanity whiſpered me, that if Lord Saliſbury never, had ſeen my ſiſter, I ſhould have been his choice.

choice. 'Ah! would it had been ſo!' cried I involuntarily. Scarcely had I uttered the wiſh, ere the Earl looked up; and ſeeing me, he bowed reſpectfully. I bluſhed, felt aſhamed; and haſtily retreated from the window.

"For ſome time I remained loſt in thought; till, recollecting the unhappy Emmeline, I upbraided myſelf for my negligence, and flew to her apartment. She had been weeping. I took her hand. 'Oh! my ſiſter,' cried I, 'could you but conquer this fatal partiality of your's, how happy might you be with Saliſbury!' 'Name it not, Conſtance,' replied ſhe, turning pale; 'death would be preferable. Contrive ſome methods rather to ſhield your unhappy ſiſter from my father's wrath, than urge me to an union heaven would forbid.' 'What can I do for my Emmeline?' exclaimed I, aghaſt, 'what bars impede your union with the Earl?' 'The being already the wife of another,' returned my ſiſter, throwing her-

ſelf on my boſom. 'Think then, think, my Conſtance, of what are now my ſufferings; and forgive and pity your imprudent Emmeline.' 'Imprudent, indeed,' cried I, pale with terror. 'Ah! what a hoard of miſery haſt thou heaped upon thyſelf! Too well I ſee the conſequences of thy raſhneſs. Did you, then, forget, unhappy girl, how little availed the tears and entreaties of a favoured beloved ſon, againſt his union with the Marchioneſs, that thus you have dared my father's indignation?'

"She burſt into tears. 'Oh! tell me not the miſery,—the ſcenes of horror, I ſhall have to encounter!—Cruel that you are, for all I am prepared, but for this change in your affections.' 'I meant not to wound you, Emmeline,' cried I, mournfully: 'Heaven knows, how dear your happineſs is to me; and to enſure it, willingly would I undergo the keeneſt torments. Nay even my father's indignation would I ſuffer, to reſcue from it that ſiſter, who has repaid the love I bear her, by cruelly

cruelly robbing me of her confidence.' 'Ah! I merit all your reproaches: Heap them on me. But ſtill, amidſt your cruel juſtice, love and pity the offender; and I will bear them, without a murmur.' 'If my Emmeline's happineſs alone depended,' ſaid I, embracing her, 'on my forgiveneſs, ſhe would ceaſe to complain of her being unfortunate. And could I thus uſe the beſt of ſiſters?' 'Oh Conſtance! you now, indeed, reproach the guilty Emmeline. But hear me, my ſiſter, and I will diſcloſe, without reſerve, the whole of the myſterious tranſaction, that forbids my union with the Earl.' 'You have become the wife of Clarence,' demanded I, interrupting her. 'I have, my Canſtance.' ''Tis then as I thought.' I ſighed in pity for her. She preſſed my hand, and proceeded. 'You well know, that the Prince was at the Marquis's, during the chief time of my ſtay at the Grove. The lively joy that filled my boſom at his coming, was damped by your cautions. Mine eyes were opened; and I felt my danger. For the firſt week after his arrival, I

ſedulouſly ſhunned his company. The Duke obſerved the pains I took to avoid him, and complained to the Marquis of the change in my behaviour.

" My brother, who much admired, and loved his noble friend, rallied me on the indifference I ſhewed to the moſt charming of men; and taxed me with want of politeneſs, in thus purpoſely ſlighting his company. I denied, at firſt, any intention of avoiding the Prince: But he urged me ſo home on the ſubject, that I was forced to acknowledge the truth. He laughed at my wiſdom, as he called it, till I felt offended. If the Prince, my Lord,' ſaid I, ' feels other ſentiments for me, than thoſe of friendſhip, it is his duty, as well as mine, to avoid each other. The Marquis repeated my words to his friend: A deep melancholy ſeized the Prince. He was wont to be the moſt lively, and animated of men, my Conſtance knows: And I but too much felt the change.

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" Being one day tempted, by the fineneſs of the evening, I ſtrolled unaccompanied down the park; the end of which led into an avenue of tall cedars;—and had ſcarcely entered the walk, ere I perceived the Prince, advancing in a penſive and dejected manner. I knew not what to do. To return immediately, was pointedly declaring, I was afraid of him; and to proceed, I felt, was dangerous. The alternative was too humiliating; and I proceeded.

" The Prince quickened his pace, on perceiving me, and ſoon came up. 'I will for ever be a votary to chance,' cried he, gaily, 'for affording me an opportunity, I have ſo long vainly ſought for, of ſpeaking to Lady Emmeline, without a witneſs: For to chance alone, I am convinced, I owe this unuſual pleaſure,' continued he, in a reproachful manner. 'You are, indeed, my Lord,' returned I, 'if you can reckon ſo unconſequential a circumſtance a favour: And I was upon the return, when I met your highneſs.' I was

now haſtening from the walk, when he prevented me.

" How is it, charming Emmeline, that I have offended? that to avoid me, you even debar yourſelf of a pleaſure?' ' Offended, Sir,' cried I, confuſedly; ' you do injuſtice to yourſelf, to ſuppoſe it for a moment.' ' Then I muſt ſuppoſe you hate me, or how elſe can I account for that cruel perſeverance, with which you conſtantly reject the ſlighteſt attentions of the moſt reſpectful, and paſſionate of your admirers? But I will rid you of the ſight of one, who is odious to you: Who, though he exiſts but in your preſence, will puniſh himſelf, in the ſevereſt manner, to give you pleaſure.' ' You miſtake my ſentiments, indeed, my Lord,' ſaid I, deeply bluſhing, ' if you can ſuppoſe that you are hateful to me, or that your abſence will give me pleaſure. I ſhould grieve that the Marquis, on my account, ſhould be deprived of the honour your highneſs confers on him, by your viſit.' ' Then, if I am not deſpicable in

in your eyes, moſt lovely of women,' exclaim-ed he, ſeizing my hand, 'ſhun not, with ſo much care, the company of him, who adores you.' Ah! accept the avowal of a paſſion, the tendereſt and moſt fervent, that ever warmed the breaſt of man.' 'This, your highneſs,' returned I, reſolutely, and with-drawing my hand, 'is a language, that our difference of ſituation makes me culpable in permitting.' I was retiring in confuſion; when again ſeizing my hand, 'Stay, cruel Emmeline,—but for one moment ſtay,—and let me, by reaſon, and unanſwerable argu-ments, convince you of the folly of attending to ſcruples, that will cheat us of our happi-neſs, and leave us repentance, and never-ending regret, as the fruit of our forbearance. If, indeed, I am indifferent to you, if you diſ-dain my ſuit,' continued he, proudly, 'have the generoſity to declare it; and I will deſiſt from urging you more on the ſubject.' 'My Lord,' cried I, with firmneſs, 'I do not diſdain your paſſion: It honours me. But prudence, duty, forbid my liſtening to it, and

make me entreat your highneſs, to follow my example.' 'Prudence!' cried the Prince, indignantly, 'and is it the cold language of prudence, that you would teach the moſt ardent of lovers? No, madam: I ſee but too plainly, that it is eaſy to be put in practice by thoſe who are indifferent; and will no longer treſpaſs on your time, and thoughts from being employed on a more favoured lover.' He turned from me, in evident diſorder, and entered the houſe; leaving me, who now no longer had pride to ſupport me, overcome with grief at the pain, I knew, I had inflicted on the moſt generous of minds.

"This had been a ſevere conflict with me, my Conſtance; and I had only the ſatisfaction, reſulting from a conſciouſneſs of having performed my duty, to conſole me for the ſacrifice of my own, and the happineſs of the man I adored. I retired to my chamber; where, overcome with various ſenſations, I burſt into tears. It was at this moment of

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ſoftneſs and tender ſorrow, for the too amiable Clarence, that the Marchioneſs entered my apartment. 'What! in tears, Lady Emmeline!' cried ſhe, ſmiling: 'But they are tears of contrition, I ſuppoſe, for the confuſion you have created.' 'I, madam!' 'Oh, you pretend ignorance, then, pretty innocent, and know not the ſenſations that you have inſpired the Duke with. He has been making moſt bitter complaints of the cruelty and diſdain, with which you treated the avowal of his paſſion; and I, as his friend, have promiſed to make you hear reaſon.' 'Ah! what has your ladyſhip promiſed! ſurely you muſt be ſenſible of the impropriety of my liſtening to the Prince, on ſuch a ſubject.' 'Not I, I aſſure you,' returned ſhe. 'Your family is one of the moſt ancient, and honourable in the kingdom; and if the Prince's happineſs depends on an union with you, the king, who dearly loves his ſon, may be brought to conſent.' I ſhook my head. 'Nay, it will depend upon yourſelf; and I ſhould not wonder, if you, by this affected cold-

coldneſs, were to chill this flame, that you have been fortunate enough to kindle, in the breaſt of the moſt admired of his ſex. But, for my interpoſition and promiſe of pleading his cauſe to you, he would, ere now, have quitted the houſe.' 'Ah! would to heaven he had!' cried I, ſighing, 'For where can I be ſafe, if the Marquis and you join againſt me? Oh! madam, how could you afford your concurrence to ſuch imprudence?' 'And is it poſſible, Emmeline, that your heart, which I ſuppoſed ſuſceptible of tenderneſs, and gratitude, can be ſteeled againſt a man like Clarence?' 'Ah no!' replied I, in tears; 'it is his intereſt in this heart, which makes me feel the danger of liſtening to him. Were it not a ſenſe of duty, that withheld me, Clarence ſhould require no eloquence, but his own, to perſuade me to his wiſhes.' 'Is the Prince, then, indeed, beloved by you, my ſiſter?' exclaimed the Marchioneſs, overjoyed. 'Ah, madam! if you, by your reproaches, have drawn the ſecret from this breaſt, in your own boſom let it

it ever be concealed.' Without making me any reply, ſhe quitted the room.

" I knew not what to think of her abrupt departure; and I remained in a ſtate of doubtful anxiety, till my brother entered my room. His countenance expreſſed pleaſure. ' You have done wonders, my lovely ſiſter,' cried he, taking my hand, ' by cauſing, in the ſpace of one hour, the extremes of the moſt powerful of the paſſions, deſpair and joy, in the ſame perſon. Nay, affect not ignorance, my Emmeline,' ſeeing me look aſtoniſhed: ' need I ſay, it is the Prince, on whom you have effected theſe contrarieties?' ' O heavens! then the Marchioneſs has betrayed me,' cried I, terrified, and gaſping for breath.' ' Call it not by ſo harſh a name, my ſiſter. Be not ſo uneaſy,' ſeeing me overwhelmed with confuſion: ' She was willing to enſure the happineſs of friends, ſo dear to me, by the avowal of your ſentiments.' ' Oh! my Lord, ſuffer me inſtantly to depart. Never can I again bear to ſee the Prince, now he

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is acquainted with my weakneſs. Why, why, did I ſo incautiouſly divulge it?' 'Be not aſhamed, my deareſt Emmeline,' cried the Marquis, tenderly embracing me, 'of being ſenſible to the merits of the moſt amiable of men, whoſe love honours and exalts you. Truſt yourſelf to me, my ſiſter; I will deviſe ſome method to ſecure your mutual happineſs.' 'Ah! no, no,' exclaimed I paſſionately: 'I muſt not hear you on this ſubject. Let me, I entreat you, return to my father; where only I can be ſafe from your temptations, and the waywardneſs of my own heart.' 'Hear me, Emmeline," interrupted the Marquis, gravely. 'Clarence and you are both too amiable, for either to be happy ſeparated; or, believe me, I would not promote an union, that muſt be contracted in a clandeſtine manner. Perhaps, I am not right; but I would not, there ſhould be two ſacrifices in our family.' He turned from me, and ſighed deeply. How much did this wound me! 'And is he not happy,' ſaid I, 'who ſo much deſerves to be ſo?' But the

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ſubject was too delicate, for even a ſiſter to touch upon; and I checked my inquietude.

" After a pauſe of a few moments, my brother continued: ' Remember, my ſiſter, that your happineſs now is within your own power: That, if you do not place it beyond the reach of accident, it may be for ever loſt. Think of the miſery of giving your vows to another, when Clarence poſſeſſes your affections.' I ſhuddered. ' Ah! brother,' cried I, ' you have conquered: I ſubmit myſelf to your guidance.' ' You have done well, Emmeline,' returned my brother, overjoyed. ' I congratulate you, on being the means of crowning the happineſs of the moſt deſerving of friends, and Princes. Whatever are the meaſures, that muſt be taken, we muſt be ſecret; and all will be well.'

' Delighted at the victory he had gained, my brother was haſtening from me. I entreated he would excuſe me to the Duke: I was not willing he ſhould ſee me, that even-

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ing. Reluctantly enough he promiſed he would; but ſoon ſent the Marchioneſs to me, unwilling, no doubt, that I ſhould be left to my reflections. 'Ah, madam!' exclaimed I, on ſeeing her, 'how have you betrayed the confidence I repoſed in you! What miſchiefs may not your imprudent avowal create?' 'I hope not, Lady Emmeline; I did it from regard to the happineſs of both. Forgive this breach of confidence now; and hereafter you will thank me for it.' I ſhook my head. 'Alas! my heart preſages otherwiſe,' cried I, ſighing, 'and I never can reconcile to my mind acting from inclination, in defiance of duty. Never can that be the path to peace. Would to heaven I had ſome unprejudiced friend, to adviſe me!' 'You infect me, Emmeline,' returned the Marchioneſs, 'by your gloomy apprehenſions: I was coming to congratulate you, on your proſpects; and you damp, by your melancholy, every thing I had to ſay. If you will try to baniſh them, I will ſup with you; as I find from my Lord, that you decline

cline coming down.' I gladly accepted her offer; as, in truth, my mind was unfit to bear the keenneſs of its own reflections.

" It was on the morning of the following day, that I received my Conſtance's letter, filled with the moſt tender ſolicitude for my happineſs; and enjoining me, as a means of ſecuring it, to baniſh from my heart the fatal impreſſion, it had already received. I wept over it. ' See,' ſaid I, entering the Marchioneſs's apartment, ' ſee the advice my ſiſter gives me: how contrary to your's and my brother's!' She took the letter, and read it. ' Your ſiſter gives her advice, without feeling, or knowing your ſituation. Would ſhe, think you, Emmeline, in ſimilar circumſtances, reject the love of the moſt charming of men? or could ſhe, ſo eaſily as ſhe adviſes you, baniſh from her breaſt the object who poſſeſſed her affections; and, what moſt probably will be the caſe, conſent to wed another? Ah no! Emmeline; it is eaſy to ſit down coolly, and dictate to others; but, be-

believe me, Lady Conſtance, would have acted, as you have done.' 'My ſiſter, madam, (replied I) whatever were her conflicts, would act with propriety. Alas! what will ſhe think of her imprudent Emmeline!' 'If ſhe loves you,' returned the Marchioneſs, 'ſhe will be rejoiced at the felicitous proſpects that await you.' I evinced tokens of diſbelief. 'Then, ſhe loves you not, Emmeline.' 'Loves me not, madam! my Conſtance loves me not, madam, did you ſay?' exclaimed I, with emotion. 'My happineſs, I am well convinced, is as dear to her, as her own.' 'Then, will ſhe not be ſatisfied, that you have taken the only means to enſure it?' I ſaw it was to no purpoſe to reply; and ſhe continued, 'I would adviſe you, by no means, to acquaint your ſiſter farther, with what paſſes between you and the Prince. You have gone too far now, believe me, to recede with honour; and ſhe will feel piqued at your acting contrary to her advice. Her remonſtrances, reproaches, and inquietude, will diſtreſs, without being of ſervice.

vice. When you meet, you will eaſily reconcile her to what may happen.' 'Ah, madam! and is it poſſible, you can adviſe me to treat ſuch a ſiſter with reſerve? The friend, the companion of my youth; to whom, till now, not a ſecret of my heart was unknown? My counſellor,—my ſoother in every diſtreſs? Ah! never, never can I be that ingrate.'

"Act as you think proper, Lady Emmeline,' cried the Marchioneſs, coolly, 'ſince I am not thought worthy of adviſing you.' 'Can I, indeed, have merited this reproach, from your Ladyſhip?' interrupted I, hurt at her manner. The Marquis entered, as I was ſpeaking. 'Your ſiſter is quarrelling with me, my lord,' ſaid ſhe: 'Come and take my part. Lady Conſtance has written a letter, that will diſturb all our plans.' 'How is this, Emmeline?' ſaid his Lordſhip, gravely. I preſented him the letter in ſilence. 'I am adviſing our ſiſter here,' proceeded the Marchioneſs, 'to let the Lady

Lady Conſtance remain in ignorance, of what is paſſing at the Grove; as ſhe is unacquainted with the tranſaction of yeſterday." My brother, after having peruſed the letter, agreed with his lady, in adviſing me to ſuppreſs all that might happen, in reſpect to the Duke. 'You will, by this meaſure, ſave yourſelf many uſeleſs reproaches, Emmeline,' ſaid he, 'from our ſage ſiſter.' 'Which, I feel, I have deſerved, my Lord,' cried I. However, by their united entreaties they extorted a reluctant conſent from me, to treat with unmerited reſerve the ſiſter of my heart. 'But you have forgiven my ingratitude, my Conſtance; and I now only am reconciled to myſelf.' 'I have, my ſiſter,' returned I; 'and I wonder not, you could not withſtand their united perſuaſions, to withhold your accuſtomed and valued confidence from your Conſtance.' 'The Marquis,' continued my ſiſter, 'now informed me, that Clarence was impatient for an interview. I trembled, and felt confuſed; yet could not deny him. I dreaded ſeeing the Prince, after what had

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paſſed; more eſpecially as your letters, my Conſtance, had made me waver in my intentions reſpecting him. I retired, therefore, for a few minutes, to compoſe my ſpirits; and during that time I ſummoned up all my ſtrength for this interview. Never had I ſo much occaſion for all my firmneſs, to ſupport me againſt my inclination to oblige the man I loved, and to act conformably with the duty I owed a ſovereign, and a father. The latter triumphed; and I deſired my brother to lead me to the Prince, fraught with the heroic ſentiment of ſacrificing love to duty.

" How little did I know my own heart! The Marquis retired, as ſoon as he had conducted me to the Duke. Ah! how confuſed did I feel, on the thanks and raptures, with which he received me! My courage forſook me; and I dared not look up. 'Why this emotion, beauteous Emmeline?' cried he, perceiving my agitation: 'Why ſo fearful of the man, whom you have for ever obliged, by your condeſcenſion?

ſion? Thus let me, on my knees, thank the authoreſs of my happineſs.' Then, caſting himſelf at my feet, notwithſtanding my endeavours to prevent him; 'Ah! generous and lovely maid, deign but to repeat to the moſt faithful of lovers, the dear, the delightful confeſſion, that you love me: Let my happineſs be confirmed by thoſe charming lips; and my bliſs will be complete.' I could only anſwer by my bluſhes; my eyes retreated from his ardent glance. 'Baniſh now, I conjure you, this cruel reſerve, my Emmeline; and refuſe not my petition. Say, you do not behold your Clarence with indifference.' 'Ah! riſe I entreat your Highneſs,' cried I, covered with bluſhes. 'Too well you know, that you are.' I ſtopped and heſitated. 'Ah! tell me, that I am dear to you, lovelieſt of your ſex: Finiſh, I conjure you, the charming ſentence,' ſaid the Prince paſſionately ſeizing my hand, and gazing with rapture on my averted face. Alas! whither fled my reſolution at that moment? I looked up. 'If it will make your Highneſs

neſs happy, know that you are moſt dear to the heart of Emmeline.' He caught me, with tranſport, to his breaſt. 'Loveliеſt, moſt adored of women,—how does this confeſſion exalt you in my eyes!' I diſengaged myſelf from his arms. I collected all my fortitude, in this moment of tenderneſs. I felt my reſolution would be completely overcome, if I did not ſtruggle againſt the ſoftneſs, which was faſt gathering round my heart.

"Hear me,' ſaid I, 'though I have acknowledged that you are dear to me, and feel that your image never will be effaced from this heart; yet my honour tells me to fly you till happier times await us. Be ſatisfied, therefore, with my confeſſion; and that no other ſhall poſſeſs the affections, or hand, of Emmeline Howard.' 'And to what period do you limit my happineſs, Lady Emmeline?' impatiently interrupted the Duke. 'Till you can obtain the conſent of my father.' 'I will fly this hour to him,' replied he, eagerly ſtarting from his ſeat.' 'And

has not your Highneſs, alſo, a father's conſent to aſk?' cried I: 'and think you, my Lord, that the Earl, my father, would ſo far forget his duty to his ſovereign, as to permit his daughter to wed his ſon clandeſtinely? Or that the king, your father, would allow your union with the portionleſs daughter of an Earl?' 'I ſee plainly, madam,' exclaimed the Prince, with an air of reproach, 'that you have purpoſely raiſed obſtacles to impede our union; which are impoſſible for me to obviate. You have miſtaken compaſſion for love, Lady Emmeline,' continued he, colouring deeply; 'or you could not ſo ſedulouſly have endeavoured to cruſh the hopes, you felt you muſt have raiſed.' The tears ſtarted to my eyes, at this unmerited reproach. 'Is this well, after the acknowledgement I have given your Highneſs, and my promiſe of eſpouſing none but you?' 'Ah! forgive me, deareſt Emmeline, my ingratitude: Forgive my having extorted thoſe precious drops of ſenſibility from your eyes. And can ſuch tenderneſs

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and cruelty inhabit the ſame breaſt? Ah! if you really love the happy Clarence, ſeize, embrace the opportunity, that heaven lends us, to be happy; and let us ſanction our loves, by ties that never can be violated.' I turned from him. 'Ah! no, my Lord; urge me not to render myſelf hateful in my own eyes; Alas! perhaps ere long hateful in yours;—by giving up every conſideration to paſſion. But for one moment ſuffer reaſon to have its ſway; and you will ſee the neceſſity of my reſolve. Let us from this hour part: For in an union like ours, will any thing but miſery attend us?' 'Can miſery ever be the portion of that man,' cried the Prince, with the utmoſt tenderneſs, 'who is bleſt with my Emmeline? And think you, I ſhall ſo eaſily forego the hopes, yourſelf have raiſed? No, never,' continued he, paſſionately, 'will I loſe ſight of my treaſure, now I know that her happineſs is concerned,—till I put it beyond the reach of fate to part us.'

" Hold,' cried I, with firmneſs, 'my happineſs is inſeparable from duty; and when parted from one, I loſe ſight of the other. It is cruel in you to ſtrengthen your argument, by an appeal to my weakneſs. Be content with my promiſe of fidelity unalterable, and aſk no more.' 'Unkind Emmeline,' cried Clarence, with anger, 'Why did you raiſe my hopes to heaven; and now ſink me to the loweſt abyſs of deſpair?' 'Your Highneſs yourſelf was to blame,' replied I. 'Ah! could I think,' returned he, mournfully, 'that you could feel tenderneſs for me; yet refuſe to take compaſſion on my diſtreſs? a diſtreſs, that you alone have occaſioned? Better had I remained in ignorance of what yeſterday afforded me the moſt extatic delight, than now to feel the hopes I had built, annihilated; and my heart racked by the additional grief of knowing, that ſhe whom I love partakes in the miſery I endure, by her too refined ideas of honour.' Theſe words were accompanied by an air and look, ſo expreſſively moving, that my reſolution began to give way, 'What

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can I ſay, my Lord? Alas! my inclinations but too much accord with your wiſhes. Not one moment ſhould you find your Emmeline waver, were her duty conformable with her love. O that I had ſome unprejudiced friend to guide me!' 'I will refer my cauſe to the judgment of my Lord, your brother,' cried the Duke, delighted at my wavering. 'Oh, no! your Highneſs is ſecure of his concurrence.' 'To the Marchioneſs then.' I ſhook my head. 'Ah! Lady Emmeline, you are afraid, then, of your neareſt relations. Would they adviſe, think you, that you ſhould act with impropriety?' 'Your Highneſs has already influenced them too much in your favor: It is to their imprudence, you owe the knowledge of my weakneſs.' 'Nay, then,' cried the Prince, 'ſince you repent your goodneſs to me, I will have no mercy; but puniſh you as you deſerve, by a reference to their judgments, without your conſent.' Upon ſaying this, he left the room, to ſeek my brother; and I retired to my chamber, unknowing whether to condemn, or approve,

what had paſſed; and dreading the powerful party againſt me; yet, much more fearful of the powerful advocate I felt within.

'How much did I wiſh for my Conſtance, to adviſe and ſtrengthen my weak heart, by her counſels! But ſhe was far from her apprehenſive Emmeline. No ſooner had I entered the apartment, where they were all aſſembled, when the Duke advancing, took my hand, and leading me to the Marquis; 'Here is your criminal, my Lord,' ſaid he: 'you know her crimes; and I demand that your Lordſhip puniſh her, as ſhe deſerves. To your judgment I deliver her up.' 'You ſhould firſt have a right,' cried I, 'before your Highneſs is juſtified in delivering me up to be ſentenced.' 'All in good time, my ſiſter,' replied the Marquis, arreſting my words, and giving them a turn, above all others, I moſt would wiſh to have avoided. They all ſmiled at the confuſion, my brother's miſconſtruction of my words gave me; and the Prince, willing to relieve me;

'Come,

'Come, my Lord,' ſaid he, 'I plead for mercy, till after the culprit has had her dinner: That ſhe may not alledge againſt us, we refuſed her time to prepare her defence.' 'I am incapable, my Lord,' returned I, 'of preparing any, as I am unconſcious of crime.' 'Your conſcience will whiſper otherwiſe to you, Lady Emmeline,' returned the Prince, ſmiling, 'if you will attend to its admonitions.' The Marquis and his Lady ſeemed to enjoy my confuſion; when the appearance of the ſervants, much to my ſatisfaction, put an end to the diſcourſe for ſome time.

"After the removal of the cloth, the Marchioneſs, riſing, ſaid; 'As I cannot, my Lords, be an evidence, in favor of Lady Emmeline; I chuſe not to be againſt her: I leave her, therefore, to the mercy of her judges.' I entreated her, with vehemence, to ſtay, and take my part. She laughed at my terror; and again ſeating herſelf, 'Take my word, my Lord,' ſaid ſhe, turning towards my brother, 'our ſiſter here is guilty,

by her endeavouring to engage my pity.' 'You are very cruel, madam,' ſaid I, piqued at her manner, and in vain ſtriving to eſcape their perſecutions; but, withheld by the Duke, I was forced to keep my ſeat. 'Never mind, Emmeline,' ſaid the Marquis, 'I will ſee juſtice done my priſoner. Come, my Lord, what is your charge againſt your culprit, that I may judge of the merits of your cauſe.' 'Till I know by what authority you uſurp that title, brother,' cried I, 'I refuſe to abide by your deciſion.' 'See,' exclaimed the Prince, 'manifeſt contempt of the court. How ſhall we puniſh her, my Lord, for this moſt heinous crime?' 'Since ſhe diſclaims my authority, your Highneſs muſt inflict what puniſhment you think proper,' replied my brother. 'Oh! my Lord, and is this the way you treat me?' I was really frightened, and trembled exceſſively. 'You have no right to complain, my ſiſter; you diſdained my judgment, and I relinquiſhed it to a judge, with whom, no doubt, you may have influence ſufficient, to make him lenient.'

lenient.' 'But what is the crime, I am accuſed of, brother? I am ignorant what you allude to. 'Poor innocent, (cried the Marchioneſs, provokingly ſmiling) you are to be ſure unconſcious of your deceit. But come, my Lord, ſince ſhe diſdains your authority, let us leave her to the clemency of her new judge; and I doubt not but ſhe will ſoon be brought to ſubmit to his moſt barbarous ſentence, whatever it may be.' So ſaying, the Marquis and his Lady, notwithſtanding my earneſt entreaties to the contrary, left the room. My attempts to follow them were fruitleſs. 'What is the meaning of all this?' exclaimed I, out of breath with apprehenſion. 'I will tell you, deareſt Emmeline,' ſaid Clarence, leading me to the ſeat I had quitted; 'Your brother and the Marchioneſs, hearing of your retracting the conſent, you had voluntarily given them both, of conferring perfect bliſs on the happy Clarence, were determined to puniſh you, for your cruelty, by their raillery; and, kindly compaſſionating the diſtreſs I felt at my diſappoint-

pointment, promiſed their influence in my favour: at the ſame time, they refuſed to judge, till they had heard what you had to alledge, in extenuation of ſuch unparalled injuſtice, as I declared you to be guilty of. Your refuſing to abide by their deciſion, made them deliver you over to the mercy of your accuſer. But ſee, beauteous Emmeline, your judge at your feet; who delivers over to you, all the right that has been inveſted in him, by the Marquis; and hopes, from this inſtance of generoſity, you will take example, and paſs a favourable ſentence.' 'Hear it, then, my Lord,' cried I, with ſuitable gravity. 'For daring to accuſe me to the Marquis, and Marchioneſs, I baniſh you my preſence, till you can get ſecurity for your future good behaviour; namely, that you will forbear all mention of your paſſion for me, till you have my permiſſion.' 'Oh, what a malicious little tyrant have I made my judge?' cried Clarence, ſmiling: 'But, as this is the return you make, for my unexampled generoſity, I will take example from you, and

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doubt the authority, I conſented to abide by.' 'Ah!' replied I, 'your Highneſs's generoſity, I find, was only intended as a bribe; and therefore, I will puniſh you, by leaving you as you deſerve.' 'By heaven, you ſhall not,' exclaimed the Prince, detaining me; 'nor ſhall you leave me, till you have given your approval of your brother's conſent to my happineſs.' 'Ah!' cried I, ſtruggling to get looſe; 'let me go, before I agree to my deſtruction,' 'Never,' cried he, with ardour, 'till you have promiſed me your lovely ſelf.' 'Well, then, ſince it muſt be ſo, there, take my hand.' 'Heavenly creature!' exclaimed the Prince, catching me to his breaſt in rapture; 'Oh! how I am bleſt!'

'After a few moments, ſpent in thanks on his ſide, and a mixture of confuſed pleaſure, and apprehenſion, on mine, I broke from him, and ran into the Marchioneſs's dreſſing-room; where, half out of breath, I threw myſelf upon the ſofa. 'Well, Lady Em-

Emmeline, when am I to give you joy? for I ſuppoſe, by this time, every thing is ſettled.' 'Ah!' cried I, 'name it not: I cannot bear my own reflections. Why, why did you leave me?' 'Very fine this truly,' returned the Marchioneſs; 'you are going to quarrel with me, for following your own inclinations.' 'Oh!' cried I, 'it was a determined matter, before I even gave my conſent; and I have only tamely fallen into the ſnare, the Marquis and you laid for me.' 'You will do well, Emmeline, now to repent after the miſchief is done.' 'Ah! reproach me not, madam, with my weakneſs, I entreat you: It is too cruel.' 'Reproach you! no: I applaud you,' cried ſhe, embracing me; 'but be not childiſh, and upbraid yourſelf for what is now paſt recall.' 'I know it, (replied I, ſighing, 'and would fly from the pain that reflection excites.'

'The Marquis at that moment entered the room, and embraced me, with an emotion of joy. He acquainted me, that he had juſt quitted

quitted the Prince, who ſeemed intoxicated with his happineſs. 'Lady Emmeline,' ſaid the inexorable Marchioneſs, 'has been endeavouring to pick a quarrel with me, for permitting her to pleaſe herſelf. It is fair you, my Lord, ſhould bear a part of her very heavy diſpleaſure.' She ſmiled, as ſhe finiſhed theſe words, with the moſt provoking archneſs. 'Ah, madam,' cried I, 'forbear your raillery now, I beſeech you: I ſubmit to the deſtiny that awaits me, ſince you will have it ſo.' 'A very terrible one truly,' returned ſhe, in a compaſſionating tone: 'To be obliged to marry the moſt charming of men, and one whom you love,—a Prince too,—is of all caſes, the moſt pitiable!' However vexed I felt at her manner, I could not help ſmiling at theſe words. Yet I petitioned ſo vehemently, to be ſpared farther raillery, that ſhe deſiſted; and a ſerious and intereſting converſation took place, in which we were ſoon joined by the Duke; who now was impatient for a day to be fixed for our nuptials. I left this matter to be ſettled by my brother, and

and the Marchioneſs, only requeſting, that it might be delayed, to as long a time as poſſible. They, accordingly, named that day week; and I received the rapturous thanks of Clarence, for my ready concurrence with their determination.

'I could hardly ſupport my mind from ſinking, under the various cauſes of dread and apprehenſion, that aſſailed it, the day previous to the raſh action, I was about to commit. Dreadful preſages filled my ſoul with horror. The Marchioneſs endeavoured all in her power, to keep up my fleeting ſpirits.

At length the morning came, that ſaw me united to the moſt amiable of men. None of the domeſtics, ſave my own woman, were let into the ſecret of my marriage; and the ceremony was conducted with the utmoſt privacy.

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